Al-Qaida owns Turkey blasts,vows attacks in Japan

Story on PAGE A10

MATUTULALA
KA SA LALA
NG PROBLEMA

RP woes leave Copa speechless

By Christian V. Esguerra

IN A country where neither side of the power spectrum accepts the other side's rule, the politics of

RP/A9

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

No out-of-court settlement–Palace

DID he or didn't he?

The Agence France Presse yesterday reported that, according to Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Saludo, the President was considering out-of-court settlements of cases involving her political rivals.

But Saludo denied making any such statement. In an "urgent media release" circulated last night, the Palace also is-

NO/A8

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Tuesday, November 18, 2003 ★★ 44 pages / 4 sections / vol. 18 / no. 343 P15 website: www.inq7.net

Estrada defends GMA

FPJ, Ping held secret meeting 4 days ago

By Christine O. Avendaño

MOVIE star Fernando Poe Jr. may be serious after all about seeking the presidency.

Poe met with Sen. Panfilo Lacson four days ago at the actor's residence in Greenhills, San Juan, the INQUIRER learned yesterday.

Lacson has declared that he is running for president in next year's polls, while Poe has yet to announce whether he will make himself available as a presidential candidate for the opposition.

When contacted by the INQUIRER, Lacson and Sen. Vicente Sotto, whom Poe had designated as his spokesperson, confirmed that the meeting took place on Nov. 14. Lacson said he had sent an invitation to Poe last month for a meeting and that on Thursday Poe asked for a meeting with him.

Lacson did not want to say what he and Poe talked about in what the senator described as a long meeting. "It was a meeting between two decent human beings," was what Lacson would only tell the INQUIRER.

Sotto said he knew about the Poe-Lacson meeting but, like Lac-

FPJ, PING/A8

4.2M ready to vote for first time

By Martin Posadas Marfil

A TOTAL of 4.2 million first-time voters registered with the Commission on Elections by the end of the registration period for first-time voters and transferees on Nov. 9. The voters' registration and validation period started on Aug. 4.

The Comelec disclosed yesterday that 11.2 million voters registered or verified their applications as of Nov. 11, representing about 25 percent of the country's estimated 43 million voters. Of the 11.2 million, 7 million had their registrations validated.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said that the 11.2 million did not include the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, La-

4.2M READY/A8

A DOOR explodes as soldiers from the Philippine Army's Light Reaction Company assault a building to simulate a hostage situation during a live-fire demonstration on Monday in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija. AP/BULLIT MARQUEZ

Slum folk wooed for another Makati rally

AP/BULLIT MARQUEZ

US Ambassador Ricciardone, (left), US Ambassador-at-large Black and Maj. Gen. Braganza cover their ears while watching a live-fire exercise above.

By Christian V. Esguerra and TJ Burgonio

WHILE Malacañang's total reconciliation plan continues to draw fire, groups identified with the political opposition are silently regrouping for another mass action.

Two ranking Philippine National Police officials yesterday confirmed that the groups were recruiting protesters from slums in Metro Manila and neighboring provinces, particularly in Southern Tagalog, to join a massive protest action similar to last week's Ayala Avenue demonstration.

In Metro Manila, one police official said, recruitment was particularly intense in Payatas in Quezon City and the Baseco compound in Manila, known bailiwicks of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Residents were being offered money, the other official said, but he did not elaborate. In last week's rally, protesters admitted to the police that they had been paid anywhere from P150 to P500 to join the mass action.

Once the organizers have gathered enough warm bodies, the second official said, organizers and their recruits would again march to key areas such as the Makati finan-

SLUM FOLK/A8

Baguio's green culture braces for business boom, ad congress

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The country's summer capital today is a bustling metropolis whose cold climate has been warmed twice over by hourly traffic jams, and a concrete envelope of towering buildings and five shopping malls.

This is the sight that will greet delegates to the 18th Philippine Advertising Congress, which the city is hosting for the second time in the last 10 years.

To make way for "progress," most of the pine trees have been pushed back to the city fringes.

But the city government is embarking on a concept called "green economics," which intends to marry the new businesses being drawn to the country's coldest city with its environmentally delicate attractions.

"There are new environmental controls being set up that will allow Baguio to absorb the inflow of huge businesses pouring in," said Vic Aquitania, a planning officer who has devoted much of his career to bolstering energy conservation and environmental management policies for the city.

Aquitania cited the SM City Baguio shopping mall, which will

BAGUIO'S/A9

Kindness, not politics, but Erap denies deal

By Armand N. Nocum, Juliet L. Javellana and Carlito Pablo

HUMAN kindness, and not politics.

Deposed President Joseph Estrada yesterday defended President Macapagal-Arroyo's support for his request for US-based medical treatment as an act of compassion—even though it came almost three years late.

"Finally, she was enlightened and I am grateful for her being compassionate now," Estrada said, adding, however, that he would have appreciated the conciliatory gesture if it had been made more than two years ago.

But Estrada strongly denied reports that he had struck a deal with the Macapagal administration.

"I will not enter into any deal with this administration. I have suffered so much already," he said. He was arrested in April 2001 on plunder and graft charges filed against him in the Sandiganbayan.

"In fairness to GMA, there is no truth to reports of any deal. There can be no agreement because my cases are tried on merit. I will never accept any pardon because I have not committed any crime," said Estrada.

But Estrada's wife, Sen. Luisa Ejercito Estrada, faulted Ms Macapagal's timing.

She said the Estrada family had been urging Ms Macapagal and her officials to grant the request, but she had not budged. "*Ngayong* election *na, payag na sila* (Now that it's election season, the administration supports the idea)," she said.

ESTRADA/A8

WYCOCO: Calls to resign unfair. We did our job. ERIK ARAZAS

TORRES to Strunk: Laugh now, I will have mine later. JOAN BONDOC

PLEASE
PARK FACING
THE STORE

DRIVE THROUGH
There is no drive-thru lane in this fast-food restaurant at the corner of Edsa Extension and President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard but a wayward bus plowed into the store on Monday morning, leaving at least 10 people injured. The driver fled. JESS YUSON

Nida's daughter slams NBI, DOJ

By Volt Contreras, Luige del Puerto and Philip C. Tubeza

"WHAT a shame! The support I needed had to come from an American."

No longer a tearful orphan, Kaye Torres, the only child of slain actress Nida Blanca, yesterday emerged prepared for "a battle" not just for justice for her mother's brutal murder but against officials whom she accused of bungling the extradition case in the United States against the prime suspect, Blanca's American husband Rod Lauren Strunk.

Flanked by lawyer Harriet Demetriou and members of the actress' family, Torres said at a press conference that if the continuing word war between her and the Department of Justice and National Bureau of Investiga-

NIDA'S/A4

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northeastern Luzon will be cloudy with rains. Southern Luzon, Visayas and Northern Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be will be partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/11/18/03 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Second FRONTPAGE

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

'Villaruel could have used finger to detonate bomb'

By Christine O. Avendaño

HE COULD have used his finger to detonate explosives.

This is essence was police officials' excuse for peppering Col. Panfilo Villaruel's face and body with bullets when a Swat team retook the Ninoy Aquino International Airport control tower very early on Nov. 8.

What Villaruel, and his aide Lt. (s.g.) Ricardo Catchillar, did was "like acts of terrorism."

"Villaruel took over a vital installation. This was an act of a terrorist," said police Senior Supt. Andres Caro II, director of the Philippine National Police Aviation Security Group, to the senators conducting an inquiry into the events of Nov. 7-8.

Three Senate committees headed by the justice committee chaired by Sen. Francis Pangilinan are looking into charges that what police did to retake the control tower was an "overkill."

Caro said that prior to the attack on the control tower, the assault team was informed that there were three persons behind the siege who were armed with handguns and probably grenades, and the tower may have been ringed with bombs.

Earlier, he said, the assault team was told that as many as 12 men were involved in the siege.

Caro, who led the 14-member assault team, said they had no way of knowing at the time how many explosives Villaruel and Lt. (s.g.) Ricardo Catchillar had, but believed it was "more than enough to blow up the tower."

After blasting the steel door leading to the tower, the raiding team—which was divided into two groups—entered and Caro said it was the two men inside who fired first.

Still moving

Caro said that after the assault team came in, they saw that Villaruel was still moving and they fired more shots at him, fearing he would be able to detonate a bomb using his finger.

Villaruel suffered 12 bullet wounds, seven in his arm, nearly severing it. The three bullets that hit his head obliterated his face.

Police recovered two handguns and a Jericho 94F 9-mm and Remington .45-cal. pistols. There was no mention of grenades or explosives.

Villaruel's widow, Theresa, and Sen. Ramon Magsaysay disagreed with the terrorist tag.

Mrs. Villaruel, who was at the hearing along with her daughter Mary Anne and son Frederick, said the statements of the police officials at the hearing were "all lies."

"I don't think he was a terrorist. He sacrificed his life for all of us," Ms Villaruel said of her husband after the two-hour hearing. "He saw something wrong with our system so he wanted to change it perhaps but by peaceful means."

No terrorist

In a statement, Magsaysay asked why Villaruel was tagged a terrorist when Congress had yet to pass the anti-terrorism bill that would penalize acts of terrorism.

"With due respect, Colonel Villaruel might have been guilty of committing criminal acts but not terrorism," said the senator, chair of the national defense committee.

"But in the same manner, a number of ATO officers and other government officials at the helm of the country's transportation and communication department must face criminal and administrative sanctions for failure to enforce the laws," Magsaysay said.

Mrs. Villaruel said the assault team "wanted to silence" her husband, thus, they resorted to an "overkill."

Eduardo Escueta, the Villaruels' lawyer, said the family intends to sue the authorities for murder.

Wilhelm Soriano of the Commission on Human Rights, who attended the hearing as an observer, said the assault on Villaruel was "unnecessary" given that no lives of plane passengers were endangered at the time.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza said he was the one who ordered the assault on the tower at around 2:30 a.m. on Nov. 8.

Mendoza said the crisis committee was concerned about the safety of incoming and outgoing flights that were to be diverted to Clark and Cebu.

He said these flights carrying a total of 40,000 passengers would have been at risk since Clark has no computer system and the Cebu airport has limited facilities.

But ATO officials said they were able to set up an alternate control tower at the Naia Crash, Fire and Rescue building and this was able to operate.

On questioning by Senate President Franklin Drilon, air traffic controllers said the alternate control tower was able to oversee the takeoffs and landings of 120 domestic and 50 international flights on Nov. 8.

This included the plane carrying President Macapagal-Arroyo to Mandaue City at 10 a.m.

"So there was no urgency for the attack on the control tower," Drilon later told reporters.

NOT TO SCALE? Theresa Villaruel and her daughter, Mary Ann Timbol, stare past a scale model of the Naia 2 control tower in which their husband and father, Col. Panfilo Villaruel, and an aide died, during yesterday's Senate hearing into the response of the police assault team that retook the tower which has been dubbed an "overkill."

JESS YUSON

APPEAL TO THE PRESIDENT

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
Malacanang Palace
Manila

Her Excellency,

In 1998, Congress passed Republic Act No. 8479, otherwise known as the "Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Act" aimed at creating an environment where competition may thrive with the entry of new participants. The law has generated sufficient interest because, to date, there are approximately 200 independent Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) refilling plants.

The employment opportunities created by these independent refilling plants cannot be overlooked. Each LPG refilling plant directly employs about 50 individual workers or approximately 10,000 workers. And each of these refilling plants has an average of 2,000 retailers (dealers and outlets) or a total of 400,000 retailers, whose respective families depend in some degree on the income derived from the LPG retail business.

The benefit of deregulation is the impact on the price of LPG, which needless to say, is a basic commodity for most households. Due to the increasing share in the market of the independent LPG refillers, the alternative price they offer has caused prices to stabilize. This price is generally lower than that of the oil majors because of the discount from bulk purchases and lower overhead expenses.

It is not true that the lower prices of independent LPG refillers and marketers are due to defective cylinders. While independent LPG refillers and marketers had been heavily investing in the purchase of LPG cylinders, the oil majors have recycled these cylinders by name plating of their respective marks. Thus, some of the cylinders being used by the oil majors are owned by the independent LPG refillers and marketers, and any issue as to safety should be readily discounted. Besides, the act of name plating could be unsafe and not provided by law passed by Congress.

Recently, however, the independent LPG refillers and marketers are experiencing undue harassment from a few sectors of the government. Law enforcement agencies such as the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) of the PNP and Task Force Jericho of the DILG have intensified efforts to flag down delivery trucks and in conducting illegal search and seizure of the establishment of independent LPG refillers and marketers without proper coordination with the Department of Energy. The same law enforcement agencies, including the PNP in general, had been slow, however, in responding to four (4) incidents of hold-ups inside establishments of refillers and marketers during the last four (4) months. This does not include numerous hold-ups of their delivery trucks.

This matter had been properly brought to the attention of the Department of Energy and othe concerned agencies, but the same remain unabated. The independent LPG refillers and marketers perceive that the bias in favor of the oil majors and against the independent LPG refillers and marketers are intended to eliminate competition. This very well defeats the essence of deregulation. The independent LPG refillers and marketers would like to bring directly to the attention of Her Excellency the issues and concerns that affect them, in order that the same may be properly addressed for the greater benefit of public welfare.

Liquefied Petroleum Gas Marketers Association
(LPGMA)

ADVT

US lauds antiterror drive; militants hit military reforms

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WASHINGTON would be pleased.

United States antiterror czar Copper Black yesterday met with President Macapagal-Arroyo and expressed satisfaction over the country's efforts in the worldwide campaign against terrorism.

Black, ambassador at large for counter-terrorism, praised the President Macapagal's decision to put the regional terror network Jemaah Islamiya on top of the order of battle, "where it should be."

In a press conference in Malacañang after meeting with Ms Macapagal, Black said the Philippines was a "key venue" in the global war on terrorism.

Black earlier met with Philippine National Police chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Gov. Rafael Buenaventura and National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco.

National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency hosted a three-and-a-half hour meeting with Black last Friday on the government's 16-point program for counterterrorism and the President's three-tiered defense plan—intelligence, hardening of targets and incident management.

The US official said American leaders had "tremendous admiration" for Ms Macapagal's courage and leadership.

Washington could "take great pleasure" in its partnership with the Philippines, Black said: "We have no partner in the region that has made more progress in a shorter period of time than the Philippines."

But in Lucena City, a militant group warned against increased militarization and the US government's military expansion plans.

Crispin Beltran, Anakpawis national political party chair for electoral concerns, said the group that the government created to implement reforms in the armed forces would only put the county under tighter military influence and control.

The defense department earlier announced the creation of the 25-man Joint Defense Assessment (JDA) group, a result of US President George W. Bush's recent visit to Manila, when he pledged technical assistance, field expertise and multi-million dollar funding for the AFP's modernization plan. *With Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, and Norman Bordadora*

Marcoses' proposal on mediation junked

AN AMERICAN court has stopped cold the Marcos family's suggestion to conduct mediation talks in the United States for assets worth almost $700 million.

The assets include $638 million in Swiss deposits now held in escrow by the Philippine National Bank and $35 million allegedly hidden in a Panamanian corporation named Arelma.

In a four-page order filed on Nov. 12, the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit based in Honolulu, Hawaii, rejected the proposal.

"It appears that the various preconditions set by the parties cannot be met," Chief Circuit Mediator David Lombardi said.

The Philippine Commission on Good Government (PCGG) welcomed the decision.

"Mediation means parties are willing to sit down and talk. But we have made our position clear that we are unwilling [to do so]," PCGG Commissioner Ruben Carranza told the INQUIRER.

Carranza said the Marcoses' move was meant to delay and undermine the finalization and enforcement of the July 15 Supreme Court decision declaring the deposits ill-gotten and forfeiting them in favor of the Philippine government.

On Oct. 28, Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., through his lawyer John Bartko, wrote a letter to US Court of Appeals Circuit Mediator Mary Schlepp proposing the mediation, during which he said the "possibility of a settlement" would be discussed.

But on Nov. 5, the PCGG asked its American lawyer Steve Bomse to inform Schlepp that it was not willing to negotiate.

Carranza gave two reasons: First, the Supreme Court already ruled that the assets were ill-gotten. Second, the Philippine government has sovereign immunity and is beyond the jurisdiction of US courts. *Alcuin Papa*

Customs admits corruption in bonded warehouses

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUREAU of Customs yesterday admitted that corruption plagues the customs bonded warehouse system, but clarified that the P100 billion amount reported to have been lost by the government due to scams perpetrated by local bonding firms may have been be overstated.

"We agree that there is a problem which was why since last year, we have been shutting down bonded warehouses and have subjected those recently accredited to tighter regulations," said Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo.

As of Sept. 30, Bernardo pointed out, the outstanding amount of unliquidated obligations only stood at P5.7 billion from the five major ports nationwide accounting for 90 to 95 percent of the volume.

"This is small compared to P100 billion ... And, as of Oct. 15, we have already filed 44 collection cases against various surety companies in various regional trial courts and this covers P4.5 billion of the P5.7 billion. It is not as if we have done nothing about this," Bernardo said.

The five major ports include Manila, Manila International Container Port, Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Batangas and Cebu.

Tatad was right

"Former Senator Tatad is not incorrect when he states that the problem of unliquidated bonds has existed for a long time. However, he erroneously gives the impression that government is not taking steps to recover the amounts," Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said in a statement.

Camacho disclosed that Customs had ordered bonded facilities to be industry-specific to regulate their operations. The Customs has also been conducting an inventory of the surety bonds that are due and demandable so it could press for collection.

Customs requires a surety bond to ensure that exporters who claim tax incentives for their imports of duty-free raw materials that pass through bonded warehouses would export their product.

Tatad blamed the Department of Finance, the Customs Bureau and the Insurance Commission for allowing corruption in the customs bonded warehouse system to proliferate and deprive the government of up to P100 billion in collections.

Bernardo said Customs has come up with tighter rules on customs bonded facilities and would issue a new order this week addressing violations among importers.

Closed

Last year, the government closed close to 1,000 customs bonded warehouses to plug revenue leaks and stamp out smuggling.

"The system of having bonded warehouses was created for a specific purpose which was to help exporters but had been abused through the years," explained the Customs chief.

Bernardo said some warehouses were used to smuggle in goods and evade tariffs and taxes.

The problem outlined by Tatad, Bernardo said, is an "age-old" problem which started much earlier and is being addressed by the present customs administration.

This, Bernardo said, will involve imposing stricter measures on importers and surety firms like proving their percentages of liquidated liabilities and putting more pressure on importers.

"We're saying that if an importer has unliquidated duties, section 1508 of the Tariff Code will be imposed," he said.

Under this provision, the BOC can hold the release of cargo and future shipments of the importer to cover the account. *With a report from Martin P. Marfil*

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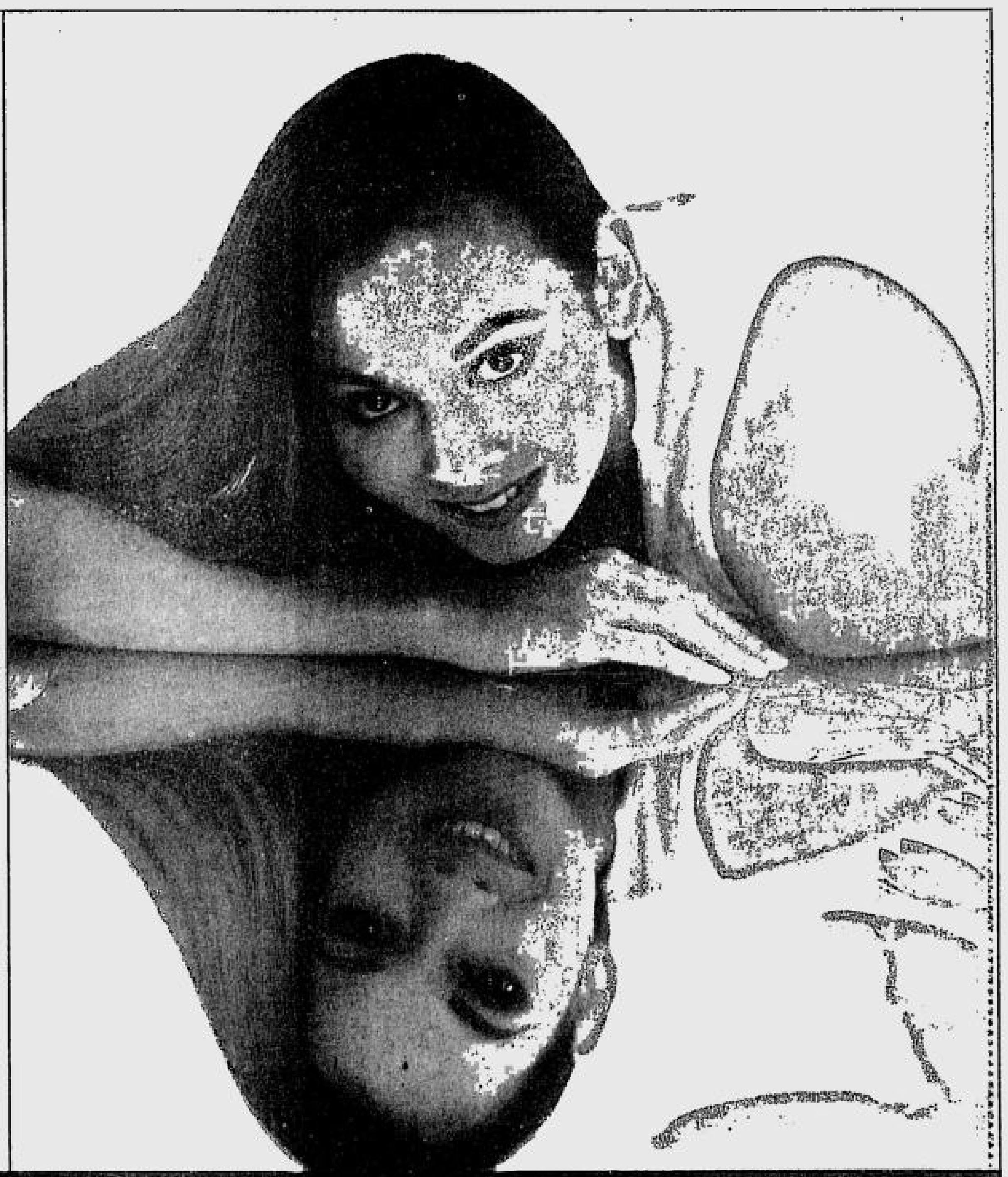

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MONDAY-FRIDAY: 8:00AM-7:00PM SATURDAY: 8:00AM-5:00PM

Nida's daughter slams NBI, DOJ

From page A1

tion would "wake up the country to the corruption that's going on, so be it."

She faced reporters at the tomb of Blanca, aka Dorothy Jones, at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina four days after a California court junked the extradition case against Strunk due to "conflicting and inconsistent evidence" that the DOJ and the NBI had submitted.

As Demetriou repeated her call for the resignation of NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco and Justice Undersecretary Merceditas Guttierez, Torres dragged a higher public official into her bitter griping.

President Macapagal-Arroyo herself, she said, "promised me that the case will be solved during her administration."

"But at this point, will this case be solved in this administration? This is a big question mark," Torres said in Filipino. "I'm not saying you couldn't do it, but if you could, then do it. Show us that you can do it. Solve this case now."

At one point, she recalled that no government representative attended the US proceedings on Oct. 7 and that she only had her American lawyer beside her in the courtroom. She was referring to US District Attorney Ken Melikian.

"Do I really have to plead with them? Isn't it they have that responsibility; they knew what steps to take if they were really serious," she said, referring to Wycoco and Gutierrez.

Own money

Demetriou said she and Torres even spent their own money to help collect evidence for the DOJ so the agency could use its budget instead to send a representative to the United States.

"Why didn't the department give this case much importance?" the lawyer asked. "Is it because Nida was just an actress?"

"And not a politician?" Torres quipped.

"I just want to tell you how bad I feel. It was so easy for them to tell us to just keep my peace. Is this because it was not their mother who was murdered, anyway?" she added in Filipino. "I just feel very sad about the lack of compassion that I see from our DOJ and NBI."

"But we will not stop. You have no right to make me stop. It is my right to fight for justice for my mom. It is my right. I will not be silenced," she said.

Torres reserved her last words for her estranged stepfather. "Rod, this is not finished yet. You have your laugh now, I will have mine later," she said.

Senate probe

Demetriou said she would seek a Senate inquiry into how the DOJ and NBI blew the case.

She enumerated the alleged blunders the DOJ and NBI committed in the extradition case against Strunk:

- Documents, including the extradition application, were haphazardly prepared.
- The NBI had not submitted up to 36 documents that the DOJ needed in filing the extradition application as of June 24, even though the deadline for the filing of the case in the United States was July 11.
- The DOJ did not submit Strunk's undertaking, in which he promised to come back to the country, and a Commission on Human Rights report stating that Philip Medel was not tortured into admitting he had killed the actress. (Strunk left the country on Jan. 21, 2002 to visit his mother. Since then, he has refused to go back to the Philippines, saying that he would not get a fair trial in the country.)
- The DOJ did not send Filipino lawyers to watch over the case's progress in California. In contrast, Strunk's Filipino lawyers flew in to defend him.
- The US lawyer representing the Philippines even complained of the seeming "lack of interest" on the part of the government to pursue Strunk's extradition.

JUSTICE FOR NIDA

KAYE Torres, Nida Blanca's daughter, assails alleged government negligence after a US court threw out the extradition case against Rod Strunk. With Torres during the press conference are her lawyer Harriet Demetriou and her grandmother, Inocencia. JOAN BONDOC

Demetriou lamented that during the hearings, only Mellikian was there to represent the Philippines. "The government has money to spend when it looked into (Sen. Panfilo) Lacson's alleged secret dollar accounts in the United States. It has money for Atong Ang's extradition case, but it has no money for this case," she said.

The feisty former Pasig City judge said the DOJ even asked her to get a few documents for them because the NBI was not cooperating. Among the documents she obtained was a CHR report which said Medel, the self-confessed killer, was not tortured into admitting the crime.

"If these were included in the extradition application, the (US) judge would have been enlightened," she said.

Demetriou then accused Wycoco of politicking. "He went to the US and interviewed FBI (agents) about the alleged Lacson accounts. It's not that I'm defending Lacson, it just shows how much the government had neglected (Blanca's) case," she said.

She also criticized Wycoco for "feeding" on rumors that Blanca had received P200 million from former President Joseph Estrada in two installments—P50 million and P150 million.

Wycoco denied accusations by Demetriou that the NBI politicized the case by dragging the name of Estrada into the investigation. He told reporters it was Demetriou who revealed that the bureau had checked out the link between the Jose Velarde account (of Estrada) and Blanca.

The NBI chief said that Demetriou had also tried to verify information that Medel was supposedly identified as a security officer of Jude Estrada, a son of the deposed President, while Mike Martinez, an accomplice, allegedly used to be a security officer of Sen. Loi Ejercito.

Unfair

At their joint press conference at the DOJ, Wycoco and Gutierrez branded as "unfair" Demetriou's call for them to resign and disputed, point by point, the allegations of negligence that Demetriou and Torres made.

The two officials even produced a copy of the controversial undertaking in which Strunk's lawyers said that he would return to the country.

Gutierrez said that there was no point in finger-pointing and that the recriminations might not even help the the government's bid to bring back Strunk from the United States. The DOJ is studying whether to appeal a California court's decision junking Strunk's extradition.

"There should be an end to these discussions. Can't we just work together because these will not help the case. It will not look good to the Americans," she said.

Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong seconded Gutierrez's sentiments and defended her and Wycoco from criticism.

"There is no point in blaming one another in this case. What would be the most productive is to sit down and evaluate the evidence presented and find a way to overturn the decision," he said.

Datumanong added that "no one is to be blamed" for what happened because "the US court judge has appreciated the case in his own way."

DOJ did its best

Gutierrez reiterated that the DOJ did its best in the case and submitted all the necessary evidence needed for Strunk's extradition. She added that Demetriou also knew about all of these documents.

"I'm not blaming her. I was just reacting to her criticism of the DOJ since she coordinated with our lawyers (during the preparation of the evidence)," she said.

"I also have nothing against Ms Kaye Torres. I know how she feels. Kaye, I also love your mother. I am also a fan of hers. I understand the situation you're in. I understand how you grieve over the death of your mother because, like you I am a daughter, too," Gutierrez said.

"It's right to say that this is not yet over. I want to assure you that we will do our best," she added.

NBI Interpol chief Ricardo Diaz had some "brotherly advice" for Torres. "Stop letting people capitalize on your personal pain for their political gain."

In the end, it is the DOJ and NBI which are the allies of Torres because they want to solve her mother's death, according to Diaz. *With a report from Leila B. Salaverria*

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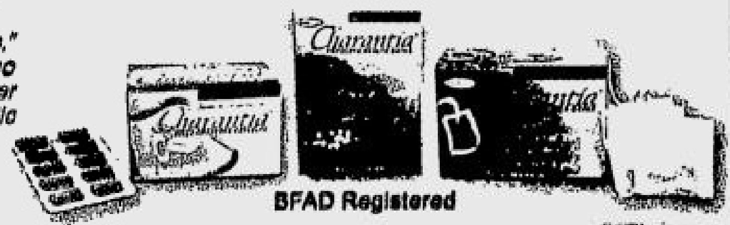

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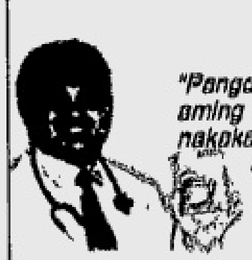

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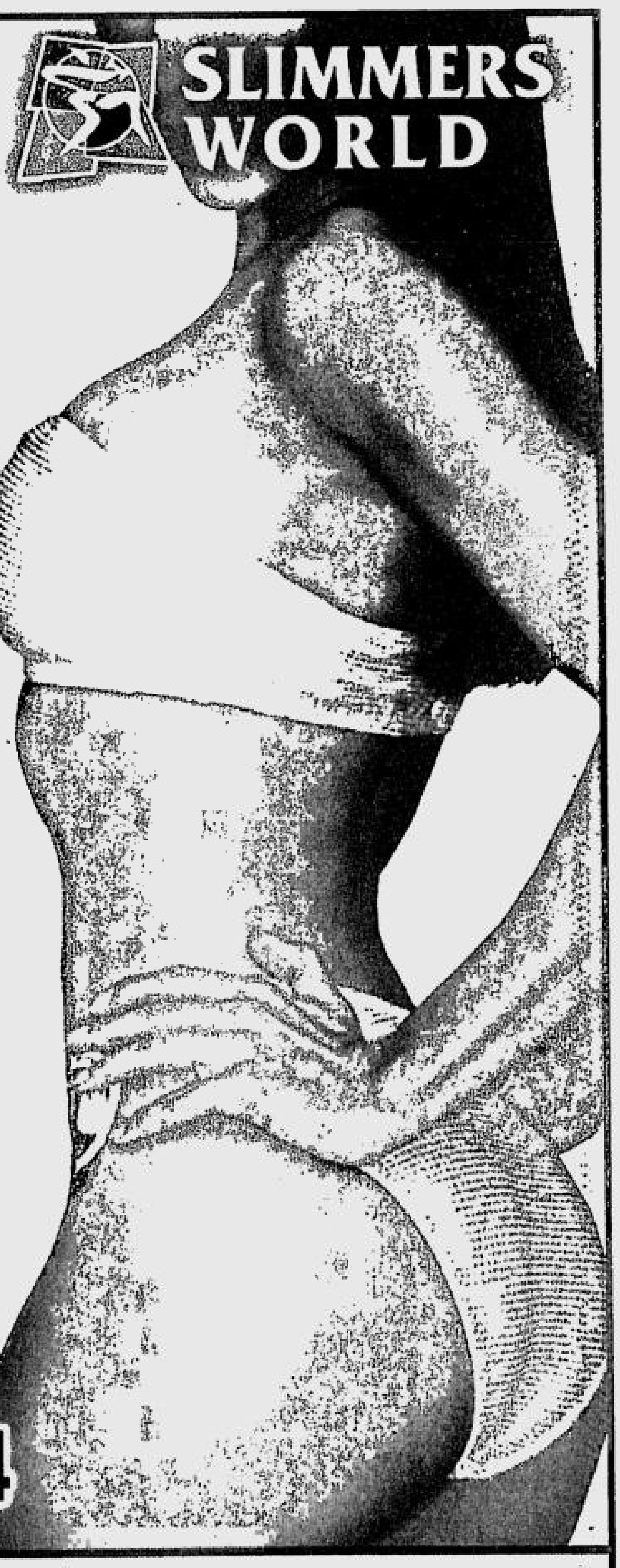

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Roco kin says he was ex-solon's bagman

By Armand N. Nocum

A RELATIVE of former Education Secretary Raul Roco, who together with Roco's two brothers was earlier accused of extortion by a textbook publisher, yesterday claimed he served as the collector of Roco's commissions from infrastructure projects funded by the former senator's pork barrel in 1997.

Ramoncito Roco Robles, vice mayor of Calabanga, Camarines Sur, made the disclosure in an affidavit filed before the Office of the Ombudsman in relation to the P2.885 million extortion case filed against him and Raul Roco's brothers, Camarines Sur Rep. Sulpicio Roco and Naga City LTO chief Ramon Roco.

When reached for comment, Roco's office categorically denied Robles's allegations.

"Raul Roco has never received commissions for any government transaction, nor has he authorized anyone to receive or solicit commissions for him," Roco's chief of staff, Ernesto Pangan, told the INQUIRER over the phone.

Pangan admitted they had yet to read Robles's affidavit.

But Pangan added that the latest allegations, along with an alleged textbook scam, were "political in nature and part of the black propaganda" against Roco, who has been topping presidential surveys.

Raul Roco's office earlier denied knowing about the extortion case, saying that if there was one, the presidential contender was not a part of it.

Interviewed by phone yesterday, Robles clarified his statement, saying that he never gave the money directly to Raul, but to Ramon.

"In fairness to Raul... it was his brother (Ramon) who received the money," he said.

Speaking from Naga, Robles said: "I felt bad because it seems I am the one being blamed for the (textbook) mess. This is unfair to me and my family."

In a separate affidavit, Ramon Roco, a brother of the former senator, dismissed the charges by textbook publisher Maria Rowena Sambell-Enesio as being politically motivated, coming as they did after Roco announced his intention to run for President in 2004 and Sulpicio Roco announced his bid for re-election.

"With respondent Ramon, the three brothers are now facing charges before the Ombudsman. Before this political season, none of them had been administratively or criminally charged before the Ombudsman," Ramon said in his Oct. 13 motion to dismiss the case.

Enesio, general manager of White Orchids and Publishing House Inc., accused the three of receiving P2.885 million from her in exchange for a P50-million, and later P200 million, textbook contracts from the Department of Education.

The contracts, however, were not approved by Raul Roco who was DepEd secretary at the time.

In several instances, Enesio said, it was Robles who received the money.

In his affidavit, Robles admitted collecting money for Raul Roco from his pork barrel projects, but denied getting money from the textbook scam because Ramon and Sulpicio had eased him out by the time Raul Roco was appointed education secretary.

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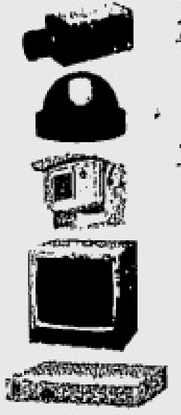

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3. Abbu, Florencia Sealana
4. Abella, Oscar N.
5. Abragan, Albert B.
6. Alhambra, Reynaldo A.
7. Angeles, Adoracion Gaspar
8. Arcamo, Suceso A.
9. Arcangel, Paul T.
10. Arizala, Gregorio A.
11. Aries, Henry D.
12. Avisado, Adoracion Cruz
13. Baclig, Vivencio S.
14. Baldado, Ismael O.
15. Barinaga, Sylvia Katherine Luczon
16. Barrientos, Oscar P.
17. Bathan, Alicia Evangelista
18. Bato, Ramon M. Jr.
19. Bay, Teodoro A.
20. Bernabe, Estela Perlas
21. Besana, Lolita Contreras
22. Borja, Romulo V.
23. Bruselas, Apolinario D. Jr.
24. Cabado, Rodolfo V.
25. Calderon, Dan R.
26. Calingin, Francisco L.
27. Camello, Edgardo A.
28. Carpio, Agnes Reyes
29. Catil, Noli T.
30. Chiongson, Roberto S.
31. Cruz, Stephen C.
32. Cueva, Eulogia Makabenta
33. Dalisay, Moises G. Jr.
34. Damasing, Henry B.
35. Danganan, Mariano C.
36. De Castro, Antonio I.
37. Dela Peña, Jesus S.
38. Deloria Merlin D.
39. Delos Santos, Edgardo L.
40. Demecillo, Leonardo N.
41. Dicdican, Isaias P.
42. Dimaampao, Japar B.
43. Dizon, Agustin S.
44. Dumdum, Simeon P. Jr.
45. Escobido, Jose L.
46. Eugenio, Antonio M. Jr.
47. Europa, Virginia Hofileña
48. Farrales, Josefina Dawatis
49. Floro, Florentino V. Jr.
50. Garvilles, Edgar G.
51. Gil, Santos T.
52. Gonzaga, Augustinus V.
53. Guillen, Marissa Macaraig
54. Hernandez, Jose R.
55. Ibarreta, Salvador M. Jr.
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58. Ismael, Harun B.
59. Lagos, Rafael R.
60. Laqui, Hilario L.
61. Lim. Rodrigo F. Jr.
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65. Malik, Jacob T.
66. Mangrobang, Cesar A.
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68. Mendoza, Epifania Navarro
69. Montesa, Jacob F.
70. Nabong, Juan C. Jr.
71. Pacatang, Josie S.
72. Paderanga, Maximo G.W.
73. Paguican, Pelagio, S.
74. Pantanosas, Gregorio D. Jr.
75. Paredes, Meinardo P.
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79. Ranada, Saliago J. Jr.
80. Reyes, Wilfredo D.
81. Rojas, Pablito M.
82. Roxas, Vicente Q.
83. Salazar, Valerio M.
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90. Veloso, Vicente Sofronio E.
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The public may submit any sworn complaint, written report or opposition against any of the aforesaid applicants / recommendees, not later than MONDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2003, to the:

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12 November 2003

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2 US Marines hurt in training

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Two American soldiers were seriously injured in separate accidents during Talon Vision 04 military exercises last week in Ternate, Cavite.

United States Col. Steven Busby, co-director of the 15-day joint ground-air training, said both soldiers belonged to the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Forces.

The first trooper fell off a cliff and suffered a back injury; the second also had a bad fall down a mountain and experienced brain swelling that required emergency surgery, Busby said. He declined to identify the Marines.

Both were airlifted to the Makati Medical Center for treatment and would have to remain in the country two more weeks.

On Monday, more than 900 US soldiers began leaving for their home base in Okinawa, Japan, as Philippine and American officials declared the exercise—held at Clark in Pampanga, the Crow Valley firing range in Capas, Tarlac; Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, and in Ternate, Cavite—closed.

Busby and his counterpart, Philippine Air Force Col. Flaviano Valdehueza, said the joint training enhanced the inter-operability of both nation's forces.

It also strengthened their friendship, Busby added.

While Brig. Gen. Charles Hotchkiss, commander of the PAF's 600th Air Base Wing, said Talon Vision 04 tackled the "full spectrum of warfare," Busby denied that it had focused on anti-terrorism.

"It was not aimed at that but we supported a number of missions," he said.

During the closing rites, Hotchkiss admitted that amid the disparity—the superior hardware of the US and the dearth of equipment of the AFP—the local soldiers contributed their knowledge of jungle warfare and close-combat tactics.

Busby said the US military, mainly the Marine Corps, spent $280,000 for the exercise.

On Tuesday, American officials are turning over to Capas Mayor Reynaldo Catacutan a four-room school building built with $70,000 earmarked for civic-military missions in Pampanga and Tarlac.

The school is located in Barangay Maruglo, east of Mt. Pinatubo, where the US military helped rehabilitate an observatory post.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

D. Guevarra; 81

DOMINGO Aquino Guevarra Sr. died on Nov. 15 at the age of 81.

His body lies at his residence in San Roque, Hagonoy, Bulacan. He is survived by his wife Jovita Sugbo-Guevarra and their children Imelda and George (deceased), Joven and Virgie, Maurice and Flora, Eddie and Cita, Rhosie and Joven, Ding Jr. and Tess, Ariel and Vangie, Deo and Gina, Delfin and Marites, Dick and Marie, Lito and Sharon, Danny and Gloria, and Thelma and Danny and their grandchildren. Interment will be announced later.

Photography by Dominique James

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Gordon plan will create C. Luzon hub

By Jerome Aning

TOURISM Secretary Richard Gordon yesterday pushed for a plan that would turn Central Luzon into a hub of economic development which would create thousands of jobs in the region and Northern Luzon.

The scheme, dubbed "3-2-1 Plan," calls for the integration of the three international airports in Manila, Subic and Clark, two seaports in Manila and Subic, and a major highway—the North Luzon Expressway—to create one powerful economic hub.

"My plan will help answer the need to create jobs for residents of Central Luzon up to Northern Luzon, particularly for the long term. If implemented, it will result in the creation of factory towns in the flatlands of Central Luzon," Gordon said.

The logistical needs of the factory towns, he said, would be serviced by the airports of Subic, Manila and Clark and the seaports of Subic and Manila.

Gordon said this would attract investments to the area and generate thousands of jobs, and at the same time ease the pressure on Manila's overburdened infrastructure and reduce pollution as well.

"This will bring work to the people living in factory towns and surrounding areas. They do not have to migrate to Manila to look for jobs," he said.

Around the factory towns, he said, thriving communities will sprout complete with educational, health, security and commercial services, thus lowering the cost of living for Filipinos in those areas.

On Monday, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines warned of higher unemployment in the second quarter of next year due to the lack of new investments to create jobs.

Ecop president Donald Dee said current trends indicate that the country is suffering more in terms of job losses, particularly in labor-intensive sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing, than in creating new jobs.

Senate honors Joe Burgos

THE SENATE yesterday honored Jose "Joe" Burgos Jr. for giving a "face to the struggle of Filipino journalists for freedom," especially during the darkest days of martial law.

In a resolution introduced by Majority Leader Loren Legarda, Burgos, who died on Nov. 16 after a lingering illness, was extolled for leaving behind a "legacy of courage, fairness and objectivity."

The veteran newsman was described by the Senate as a "pillar of Philippine journalism who inspired a vigilant and responsible press that is crucial in upholding the country's democracy."

The resolution which was due to be approved last night also embodied the Senate's condolences to the Burgos family.

In the resolution, Legarda said Burgos was the leading symbol of the alternative press, or the so-called mosquito press, which fought the 20-year rule of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. yesterday mourned the death of Burgos.

"He leaves our people in grief, and our nation orphaned of yet another patriot who did his work and lived his life with the Filipino's rights and welfare always in center focus," Guingona said.

Burgos, 62, died of cancer at the Cardinal Santos Medical Center in San Juan. *Michael Lim Ubac and Jerome Aning*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, November 18, 2003
33rd Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:	2 Mac 6:18-31
Gospel:	Lk 19:1-10

When Jesus entered Jericho and was going through the city, a man named Zaccheus was there. He was a tax collector and a wealthy man. He wanted to see what Jesus was like, but he was a short man and could not see because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree. From there he would be able to see Jesus who had to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, come down quickly for I must stay at your house today." So Zaccheus hurried down and received him joyfully.

All the people who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to the house of a sinner as a guest." But Zaccheus spoke to Jesus, "The half of my goods, Lord, I give to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay him back four times as much." Looking at him Jesus said, "Salvation has come to this house today, for he is also a true son of Abraham. The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."

Commentary

"Zaccheus, come down quickly for I must stay at your house today." Here we see the reversal of roles, the Lord becomes a beggar in order to be able to give salvation to Zaccheus. We find in the gospel that Jesus often humbles himself to ask for something or accept someone's gift in order to shower his gifts in return: the water from the Samaritan woman, the perfume of the prostitute, the five loaves and the two fishes here, Zaccheus' hospitality. No one is too poor so as not able to share something and no one too rich so as not able to receive something else.

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Estrada defends GMA

From page A1

The senator, however, noted that her husband was technically barred from going to the United States. Even if the Sandiganbayan were to allow the detained President to seek medical treatment in the United States, he could not leave because he had no valid US visa.

"He only has a diplomatic visa" which expires at the end of the year, the senator added.

Legal strategy

But a multi-sectoral organization monitoring the plunder trial said Estrada's lawyers' legal strategy to delay the trial has already borne fruit with Ms Macapagal's decision to support his request.

"What we have feared most about the Estrada plunder trial is now coming true," said PlunderWatch convenor Carol Araullo. PlunderWatch is one of the original complainants in the impeachment case filed by civil society groups in the House of Representatives in 2000.

"As we have feared, Estrada's lawyers have managed to delay the trial until 2004, when political considerations take precedence over everything else," she said.

"This issue has already been settled before. Estrada can have his operation anytime in the country with any US-based doctor of his choice. Clearly, his reason for going abroad is political, not medical or humanitarian," Araullo said.

Iglesia ni Cristo

Even so, Estrada thanked such institutions as the influential Iglesia ni Cristo for supporting his appeal for a medical furlough in the United States.

He noted that the Senate, the House, the Chinese business federations and the El Shaddai Catholic charismatic movement had also backed his request.

"I thank them for that, especially the Iglesia ni Cristo which has been concerned about my health," he said. He said he communicated with the religious group "once in a while" to "thank them for being concerned about me."

"They are better than the (leaders) in the religion I profess. They have more compassion... humanitarian concern than the Catholic archbishops," said the 66-year-old former leader, who was born a Catholic.

Estrada pointedly recalled the administration's offer for him to go abroad shortly following his ouster, which he said he turned down.

"Had I taken it, I could be living in comfort. But I decided to stay here and suffer in detention. So why will I change my mind now?" he asked.

Estrada said Malacañang was softening its stance possibly because it was aware of the seriousness of his knee and multiple slipped disc problems, health conditions that could leave him paralyzed from the waist down.

He disclosed that Malacañang had sent a representative to get copies of his medical records from the Asian Hospital and Medical Center in Alabang where he underwent an extensive medical checkup.

Senate sense

Senators Edgardo Angara and Manuel Villar said the option of allowing Estrada to be treated abroad was "long overdue."

"There is nothing political and partisan in that gesture. It is more humanitarian because as shown... the injury of President Estrada to the knees is now an injury to the spine, so the medical situation is deteriorating further. So I could not really see why they would oppose him seeing his own doctor," said Angara.

"I don't see any problem," Villar said. "He has been in jail for a long time, so I guess it is not a big deal if he would be allowed to seek treatment abroad. For humanitarian reasons, I think he should be allowed to go to the US."

Senate Pro Tempore Juan Favier, a medical doctor, said Estrada should be allowed to go.

"It is the right of every person to have a doctor of his choice. My question is, 'Would you want me to give you a doctor who is your enemy?'" Flavier asked.

Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and John Osmeña scored Ms Macapagal for her belated support.

"I have been in favor of Estrada's exile and medication abroad at the beginning of time, or even before Gloria assumed office. I have always believed that Estrada out of the country will pose lesser problems than Estrada in the country. Unfortunately now, it has to be the call of (the) Sandigan(bayan) because the case is under its jurisdiction," Pimentel said.

He said this was the "best solution the country could have done even before Gloria's assumption of office. Tensions would have been eased a great deal, and at the time we have the conformity of Cardinal Sin and Cory Aquino. I know because I went to see them on Jan. 19."

But now, he said Ms Macapagal could not ignore the court. "Had she done it before, it would have been a political call, but now it is a judicial call."

House reaction

A close associate of the President's in Congress called for a review of the plunder law, saying it was not only "harsh" but could also be used for "political vendetta."

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RECONCILIATION IN THE AIR. Pagsanjan Mayor ER Ejercito waves to the crowd as he is introduced while President Macapagal applauds him on the stage during a Farmers' Forum in Sta. Cruz, Laguna. EDWIN BACASMAS

Independent Rep. Wilfrido Villarama (Bulacan), a former chief of staff of Ms Macapagal, said: "The law on plunder as we have now can be used as a tool by someone's political enemies and for political vendetta."

Principally sponsored by then Senate President Jovito Salonga and co-authored by, among others, then Senator Estrada, the plunder law took effect in July 1991.

Villarama noted that the plunder law was apparently in reaction to the excesses committed during Marcos regime.

"It was developed by people who were angry at Marcos," he said. "A law that is based on something hateful cannot be fair."

Told that he may be perceived as wanting to soften the law as plunder charges may in the future be initiated against his friend, President Macapagal, Villarama said: "GMA will never be charged with plunder."

"I know her and her integrity is unquestionable," Villarama said.

Rep. Abraham Mitra (LDP, Palawan) said that Estrada could leave "as long as he tells us when he will be back."

Mitra said: "If this is a medical emergency, there should be no need for former President Estrada to go down on his broken knee."

But Rep. Satur Ocampo (Bayan Muna) warned that Estrada "will do a (Rod) Strunk" once he sets foot in the United States to evade prosecution and possible conviction for plunder.

Ocampo said: "An act of stupidity by the government in the case of Strunk need not be repeated."

Palace hopes

Malacañang continued to defend Ms Macapagal's policy of "humanitarian compassion" toward Estrada.

Heherson Alvarez, a presidential adviser who filed the impeachment complaint against Estrada in 2000, backed the move to let Estrada undergo knee surgery abroad.

Alvarez yesterday said the Sandiganbayan should consult medical experts in the United States and elsewhere to decide on the urgency of Estrada's request.

"This is a sincere gesture and it is unfair to read politics into it," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

"The President has expressed her personal feelings on this issue, and sees it in the public interest to adopt a policy of humanitarian compassion for a former President, given his reported health condition," Bunye added.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Ricardo Saludo said that because of Ms Macapagal's pronouncements on Estrada, his followers would no longer join protest actions against her administration.

"So this will be good for our country because we know that there are extra-legal moves against the government," Saludo said in a radio interview. *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac, Norman Bordadora; Raj Padilla and Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau; AFP*

No out-of-court settlement—Palace

From page A1

sued a categorical denial.

"Malacañang is not considering any out-of-court settlement in cases against parties with which it is seeking reconciliation. Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Saludo has denied saying that the President is 'mulling' such modes of settling disputes with major political figures with outstanding issues against the government," the statement said.

The wire report was based on an interview Saludo granted to the ABS-CBN News Channel, a cable network.

It said President Macapagal-Arroyo may seek an out-of-court settlement as part of a reconciliation bid ahead of the May 2004 polls.

It said Saludo told his interviewers that reconciliation efforts were also being worked out with opposition senators Panfilo Lacson and Gregorio Honasan who, like San Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., were all potential rivals in the May 2004 polls.

In the wire story, Saludo was quoted as saying that Estrada's camp, the heirs of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, as well as Cojuangco, would be encouraged to put forth proposals on how to resolve outstanding corruption and civil cases filed against them by the government.

Saludo allegedly also said that technically, the government could settle the civil cases against the Marcos family and Cojuangco out of court under agreements that would "satisfy the demands of justice and the demands of just restitution."

However, in the Estrada case as well as with the others, "the issue of law and the demand for justice will not be compromised," Saludo was quoted as saying.

But the Palace news release said Saludo had in fact repeatedly declined comment when asked about specific actions to resolve contentious matters with various camps.

"Let's not get ahead of ourselves," he said. "We cannot comment on specifics since there have been no substantive talks on such matters."

The rest of the Palace release read:

"Saludo said that while the President has asked Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla, president of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, to lead the reconciliation efforts, the Roman Catholic prelate has not yet undertaken any major dialogue. Hence, Saludo emphasized, "it is not appropriate to comment on any specific arrangements for reconciliation."

In the President's call for reconciliation, Saludo added, one constant principle is to satisfy the demands of justice and the law.

"The President has said that there should be a dignified admission of wrongdoing, as well as substantial restitution," Saludo explained, "Thus, reconciliation shall advance the cause of justice and the common good." *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Gil Cabacungan; AFP*

Slum folk wooed for another Makati rally

From page A1

cial district to sow chaos.

"These people won't stop until they have toppled the Macapagal administration," said a military official whose unit has been monitoring destabilization efforts against the government.

In a related move, the Armed Forces yesterday cautioned its active officers and men, particularly those who are members of the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc. (PGBI), against joining any street protests.

AFP reminder

"There is an existing policy that members of the AFP should not join rallies," Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, the military's chief information officer, told reporters. "The AFP is here to protect democracy, but we are not here to practice it," he added.

The military issued the reminder after intelligence officials said that last Wednesday's rally included an armed component of Guardians, a claim since denied by leaders of the group.

The PGBI is an association of thousands of active and retired military and police officers and civilians.

The Armed Forces does not prohibit any personnel from joining "informal groups" such as the PGBI, but bars them from taking part in protest rallies, Lucero said.

"They have no authority, the mere fact that they are members of the AFP. We do not allow our soldiers to join any rallies against the government."

The military has been holding a series of training sessions for ground troops to remind them of their duty to remain "constitutional," since over 300 disgruntled officers and enlisted personnel mutinied in Makati City on July 27.

"They should look at the service as a way to serve the people and not any other informal groups in the AFP," Lucero said.

A military intelligence official said over the weekend that the rally had an armed component from the Guardians, waiting for the situation to worsen "before moving in." Ernie Macahiya, PGBI spokesperson, admitted that he and some 1,000 Guardians joined the rally, but emphasized that they went there to air their sentiments and not to provide armed support.

The PGBI and the rally organizer, the pro-Estrada People's Movement Against Poverty (PMAP), formed part of a loose coalition called the Kilusan para sa Makatarungang Lipunan at Gobyerno, Macahiya said.

Lucero also denied reports that the AFP was conducting a loyalty check. "We already got word from the presidential adviser on media and ecclesiastical affairs that there is no such order from Malacañang to conduct a loyalty check," he said, referring to Conrado Limcaoco.

Besides, Lucero added, the military saw no need to conduct such a check on its troops on the ground, saying that their loyalty was not "questionable."

"This thing is already a non-issue and we believe that our chain of command is working efficiently. We've got knowledge of what's really happening on the ground. So we believe we don't have to resort to this so-called loyalty check to determine the pulse of our soldiers," he said.

Chief Supt. Jose Gutierrez, Southern Police District director, said police could not prevent protesters from staging rallies in Makati, especially if they had been granted a permit by the local government.

"It is their right," he told the INQUIRER. "My only hope is that the next time they stage another rally, they would respect the permit and not force an extension."

The 10,000-strong rally on Ayala last Wednesday had to be dispersed by around 300 anti-riot policemen after protesters refused to leave even after the 5 p.m. deadline on their permit had expired.

PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. had earlier identified the Council on Philippine Affairs and the People's Movement Against Poverty as among the groups that had participated in the rally. Copa secretary general Pastor "Boy" Saycon later denied his group's participation.

Gutierrez said some of the protesters had told him during the rally that they had chosen the Makati financial district for "greater impact."

True enough, he said, the rally so worried foreign embassy officials that they subsequently asked him for a security briefing.

"Imagine how much in investments will be lost because of these mass actions," said Gutierrez, who is also in charge of embassy security.

"We should remember that each embassy regularly submits reports to their respective countries. Just imagine what they would say about our country."

FPJ, Ping held secret meeting 4 days ago

From page A1

son, was mum about what transpired.

A source in the opposition camp said it was possible that Lacson and Poe discussed, among other things, the "selection process" for the opposition's standard-bearer.

Lacson had complained that the united opposition had no selection process to speak of because some leaders of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino were rooting for just one candidate, who was none other than Poe.

The senator had earlier named Sotto and Sen. Edgardo Angara, LDP president, as those giving preference to Poe.

Last month, Lacson said the opposition had no choice but to choose him because he enjoyed the support of his LDP party mates and members and leaders of other parties seeking to align with the LDP in next year's elections.

But Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. was skeptical that opposition parties would be able to unite and field a common candidate. He pleaded for leaders and presidential aspirants in the opposition "to get their act together before it is too late."

In a statement, Pimentel lamented "the lack of determination among their leaders to follow an agreed selection process."

He said he was dismayed that the opposition's road show in Bicol last week was cancelled "for no apparent reason."

"The opposition may get nowhere. It seems that there is no seriousness in pursuing the unification plan," he said.

Sotto admitted that there was no selection process until now because parties had yet to unite under the opposition banner.

Sotto said he and Poe were expected to meet last night to finalize the date for Poe's announcement of his plans for 2004. The senator earlier said that he would announce Poe's plans on or before Nov. 18.

"I will be in a better position (today) to give a definite time and a definite decision (on his plans)," he said.

If Poe decides to run in 2004, it will be only for the presidency and nothing else, according to Sotto.

"People are saying he is the one who could unite (the country) and it would be the people who could convince (Poe) to run," the senator said.

4.2M ready to vote for first time

From page A1

pu-Lapu City and Jaen, Nueva Ecija, which, he said, could produce an additional 1.3 million voters.

The number of those who would validate their applications is expected to rise because the validation for old voters will end on Dec. 12.

"That's a good number (12.5 million) as we expected only 15 million to register and validate ... We expect to exceed it (15 million)," Abalos said when asked how he would describe the turnout.

Old voters, who were unable to validate their registration, can still vote on election day but they would have to first prove that they are the persons on the voters' list.

Earlier figures released by the Comelec showed that about 2.941 million of the 5.2 million voters in Metro Manila voters had already registered. This is a 55-percent turnout for the National Capital Region.

Pateros had the highest turnout in Metro Manila with 86 percent, followed by the second district of Pasay City with 75.97 percent.

Abalos said he expected the queues to disappear this week because the Comelec would start deploying its data-capturing machines to barangays and malls.

He said the long lines were due to first-time voters and those who wanted to validate their registrations showing up at the Comelec offices.

Now that the period for registration for first-time voters is over, only those who want to validate their registrations will show up, according to Abalos.

"We just need encoders for this and it will no longer be done under the watchful eyes of the election officers," he said.

Baguio's green culture braces for business boom

From page A1

open this Friday, as one of the first new capital investments that were required to undergo stringent environmental restrictions.

Unlike other SM malls, the Baguio mall is designed for maximum daylight efficiency and is being encouraged to restore a canopy of pine trees it had to demolish to build a strip mall, city officials said.

Carlos Honorio Estepa, North Luzon vice president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), said the city would be enjoying more than P1 billion in capital investments this year alone.

Ad congress

The advertising congress is opening on Nov. 20 with at least seven major enterprises launching in the downtown area, including the SM City Baguio.

Aquitania said the city government would be enacting ordinances and policies that would protect the dwindling number of pine trees, without discouraging investors.

A new environmental code that the city council has been asked to draft requires the growing skyline of virtual skyscrapers (some as high as nine stories) to introduce rooftop gardens and to design open sky roofs that would maximize daylight and reduce energy consumption, he said.

New building laws would' require contractors to line their frontage with new trees, he added.

A survey of business sentiments produced project proposals for the marketing of LPG-run taxicabs, and biogas or methane-capturing facilities to power-up government facilities like the city abattoir, he said.

Aquitania said these were ecologically friendly programs that did not affect Big Business because "these are based on sound business logic."

Biggest asset

He said the city's biggest asset was its cold weather, and "climate protection" was a key investment the city is ready to finance.

According to him, the impact of a 1992 Asean energy management study and the 2002 World Bank climate report triggered Baguio's initiatives.

The 1992 energy study included Baguio among key Asian cities to pilot an energy conservation program that would control environmental degradation. It indicated that Baguio has a 10-year span before it will succumb to irreversible urban decay.

Last year, the World Bank report cited a huge degree of pollutants in Baguio's air, which matched and exceeded most urban centers like Manila.

Estepa said reports about Baguio's poor air quality reverberated across Big Business channels early this year, because climate is a major consideration for setting up shop.

Student population

"Baguio is drawing this much business interest because of the students. Next to Metro Manila, Baguio has the highest concentration of students. Sending students to Baguio is not cheap. The schools are expensive. The dormitories are expensive. These students are the real market, which business has targeted in Baguio because sending them here is not cheap," Estepa said.

"But students are coming in droves because of the climate, and more schools have started to come up and develop their Baguio branches to accommodate them. This growth rate is what has attracted the malls, and substantially other business ventures in the last five years."

But Estepa said bad news about the climate could turn the business faucet off.

In most cases, the air is vulnerable to rapid changes, Aquitania said. Baguio is susceptible to "stale air," he said, because the city is set at the center of a geologic bowl "where air settles and stagnates."

The climate is also a factor because cold air settles, he said. "It takes a huge storm to agitate Baguio air, otherwise, we end up with stale air," he said.

Air pollution

A suddenly vibrant business activity in the last three years has contributed to air pollution.

The population is now pegged at more than 250,000. Its growth rate of 2.3 percent each year has increased population density to 4,390 people per square kilometer.

Now, Baguio is coping with uncontained carbon dioxide emissions, Aquitania said.

But a simple policy like a number-coding traffic scheme for Baguio's 23,803 vehicles has done wonders for the air, he said. This year, the scheme has helped eliminate 20,229.25 tons of carbon monoxide.

Other disparate projects, such as the green charcoal program, and waste paper banking contributed to the elimination of 9,015.5 metric tons of carbon monoxide.

These achievements convinced the city that expanding business could be addressed by solid environmental policies.

Aquitania said this finding was crucial because the city's strong environmental consciousness had often been mistaken for an anti-business sentiment.

In 1994, Church leaders, school children and activists joined Ibalois in blocking a Taiwanese consortium from developing Camp John Hay into a mega-tourism complex.

The consolidated mass actions against Tuntex International cemented Baguio's reputation in the domestic business community as "a high-risk area," said a PCCI member.

Green campaign

Baguio soon hosted other environmental campaigns, which attacked major investments, such as the P1.7-billion San Roque multipurpose dam project in Benguet and Pangasinan.

Estepa said businessmen had always embraced Baguio's environmental doctrines and were "willing to go the extra mile by investing in them."

SM, he said, could be encouraged to help relocate the congested bus terminals to widen roads and reduce traffic at the downtown area. He said such improvements would reduce pollution and energy consumption.

Aquitania said the proposed 2004 budget already planned to carry out these energy conservation projects under the principle of "green economics."

The same conviction encouraged Mayor Bernardo Vergara last week to commit to the reduction of Baguio's greenhouse gases by 10 percent in 2004, during the Mayors' Asia-Pacific Environmental Summit that was held in Hawaii.

RP woes leave Copa . . .

From page A1

exasperation must have taken its toll on the Council of Philippine Affairs (Copa).

Copa, a lively group of political pundits who never run out of comments on just about any issue, is suddenly at a loss on what to say or do about the country's sorry state of affairs.

With the backing of several organizations, Copa had earlier boasted it could offer the nation a way out of its myriad woes.

Yesterday, however, Copa realized that the problems were far more serious than it had initially thought.

As a result, the group scuttled its plan to hold a people's congress that was supposed to gather around 400 people representing at least 29 multi-sectoral organizations at the Pamantasan ng Makati on Saturday.

Copa president Billy Esposo said recent events, such as the impeachment of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and fresh rumors of another destabilization effort against the Macapagal administration, had forced his group and its allies to "step back and look at the forest again."

"You devise solutions depending on the degree of the problems," Esposo told the INQUIRER. "With the many problems hounding our country today, are we really serious that we can address all these in one sitting?"

Esposo could not say when the planned summit would take place, saying Copa and its supporters would just sit and observe developments in the political landscape.

Esposo said his group had thought of holding the congress in August at the height of the Sen. Panfilo Lacson's expose that President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband had allegedly laundered millions in campaign contributions using his supposed Jose Pidal account.

Copa, which has maintained a love-hate relationship with Ms Macapagal, even organized rallies in front of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo's Makati office to demand a full-scale investigation of Lacson's charges.

"Ventilating views" about the matter, Esposo claimed, was appropriate at that time, considering that the country was still reeling from the political and economic effects of the failed Oakwook mutiny on July 27.

From August to late last month, Copa also met with several groups and some retired military officers, according to Esposo.

The groups included the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, Kilusang Mayo Uno, Akbayan, National Union of Students in the Philippines, and the College Editors Guild of the Philippines.

Pastor "Boy" Saycon, Copa secretary general, had earlier admitted that authorities had been monitoring these meetings on the suspicion that his group and its supporters were into another destabilization effort against the government.

Saycon claimed that these meetings and the aborted Nov. 22 summit in Makati were in fact intended to preempt a possible takeover of the government by disgruntled members of the military.

Nonetheless, Copa's failure to organize a people's congress has not deterred other groups from taking a crack at solving the country's problems.

Leftist and progressive groups are holding a summit, dubbed "Alternatiba ng Mamamayan," tomorrow at the Bahay ng Alumni in UP Diliman, Quezon City, and on Wednesday at the abandoned UE-AMI warehouse in Caloocan City.

The congress aims to gather more than 800 organizations with at least 2,000 delegates nationwide, according to Rasti Dalizo, alliance coordinator for Sanlakas.

Even so, serious doubts persist whether the resolutions adopted by such a congress would be accepted by the other side of the power spectrum.

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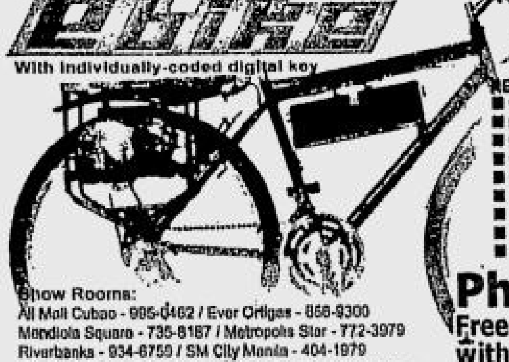

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Al-Qaida owns Turkey blasts, vows attacks in Japan, others

TOKYO—Japan and Australia said on Monday they would be vigilant after a report that al-Qaida had claimed responsibility for weekend bombings in Turkey and had vowed fresh attacks on the United States and its allies.

Neither country announced fresh security measures after the report in Sunday's edition of the London-based al-Quds al-Arabi newspaper, which was one factor behind a fall on the Tokyo stock market.

The newspaper said al-Qaida had claimed responsibility for Saturday's bombing of two Istanbul synagogues that killed at least 23 people and was planning car bombings against the United States, Britain, Italy, Australia and Japan.

The report comes at a delicate time for Japan, which is trying to decide when to send troops to Iraq and is torn between promises to the United States and domestic public opinion, which opposed the US-led war in Iraq and is against sending troops.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said Japan would respond to the report with the vigilance it has maintained since the attacks on the United States on Sept. 11, 2001.

"At times like this, there are many reports," he told a news conference. "We will have to look into it carefully."

The Nikkei average fell 3.74 percent, but a firm that specializes in gas masks for Japan's military, or Self-Defense Forces, Koken Ltd, saw its shares rise, as did other military-related firms and gas mask makers.

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said it was hard to know whether the al-Qaida statement was authentic but that Australia would not raise its counterterrorism alert level, which has been on medium alert since the Sept. 11 attacks.

"If it's authentic we treat it with scorn and contempt," Downer told reporters in Adelaide.

"I think these fanatical Islamic terrorists know only too well that there are some countries with the courage and determination to take them on and defeat them. Australia is one of those countries and Australia is a tough country."

Fukuda said Japan had received many similar reports in the two years since the Sept. 11 attacks, checked them out carefully and reinforced protection where needed.

"We haven't had anything serious up to now," he said.

"Without checking, it's hard to know if there's anything different about this time.

"Since 9/11 we have always been on guard. Strictly on guard."

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told reporters: "We must not give in to terrorism."

Among other reactions, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, quoted in Monday's People's Daily, denounced the Istanbul blasts.

"China opposes terrorism in any form and is willing to make unremitting efforts with the international community to safeguard world peace and security," he said.

Fukuda was non-committal on how the development might affect Japan's proposed dispatch of troops to Iraq.

Tokyo had been expected to commit about 150 non-combat troops to Iraq before the end of the year, but said last week following an attack that killed 18 Italians that sending troops was impossible under current conditions. *Reuters*

MISS WORLD BEAUTIES

Miss World contestants Olivia Stratton of Australia and Melanie Paul (right) of New Zealand pose at a Shanghai promenade Nov. 17. The 110 contestants in the 53rd Miss World beauty pageant are in Shanghai as part of their tour of China before competing in the final on the tropical island of Sanya in southern China's Hainan Province on Dec. 6. REUTERS

'Saddam tape' urges Iraqis to fight US

BAGHDAD—An Arab television network broadcast a purported audio tape by fugitive dictator Saddam Hussein on Sunday exhorting Iraqis to wage holy war against occupying forces and warning of more deaths for US-led troops.

In the northern city of Mosul, US soldiers retrieved wreckage and bodies after two Blackhawk helicopters collided and crashed under fire on Saturday, killing 17 soldiers in the bloodiest single incident for US forces since they invaded Iraq.

Another five US soldiers were wounded in Mosul on Sunday when a roadside bomb was detonated as their convoy passed.

"An improvised explosive device went off and there was small arms fire," said Specialist Joshua Hutcheson, spokesperson for the 101st Airborne Division. "Our soldiers responded but we had five wounded in action."

Facing a mounting casualty toll in Iraq, Washington has moved to speed the transfer of sovereignty to Iraqis in the hope of pacifying resentment toward the occupation, and the US Army has adopted new tougher targets to strike back at guerrillas.

The US military fired a satellite-guided missile on Sunday for the first time since major combat was declared over on May 1, targeting an island in a river in northern Iraq where US officers said guerrillas had set up a training camp.

The purported Saddam tape, broadcast by Dubai-based Al Arabiya television, urged Iraqis to drive out occupying troops.

"Fighting them... is a legitimate, patriotic and humanitarian duty and the occupiers have no choice but to leave our country... as cursed losers," it said.

It was the first time in two months that a tape purportedly recorded by Saddam has been broadcast. The ousted Iraqi leader is still missing with a $25 million price on his head.

US President George W. Bush dismissed the tape.

"I haven't seen the specifics," he told reporters in Washington. "I suspect it is the same old stuff. You know, it's propaganda, and we're not leaving until the job is done." *Reuters*

Thaksin: Thai boat deserved to be sunk

BANGKOK—Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra admitted Monday that Thai fishing trawlers have trespassed into Indonesian waters and that the sinking of a Thai-crewed vessel there last week was justified.

"It's true that our fishermen have violated its waters without seeking any permission or license, they have arrested five Thai fishing trawlers so far," Thaksin told reporters.

Thaksin said the Indonesian navy had sunk the latest offending boat on Friday after evacuating all 18 men on board.

"The Indonesian navy sank the Thai fishing trawler to set an example to others that they should not violate its territory," he said.

Thaksin said on the weekend that Thailand would investigate whether the action was "an overreaction" after the 18 Thais aboard the Indonesian-registered ship were arrested and one ton of fish destroyed.

Scores of Thai nationals have been caught stealing fish in Indonesian waters over the past few years as the kingdom's own fishing stocks have become depleted through overfishing. *AFP*

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Colombia blasts kill woman, hurt 72

BOGOTA—One woman died and 72 people were injured in a double bomb attack in a crowded Bogota neighborhood, emergency services said Sunday.

The woman died after being rushed to the hospital after the explosions in two adjacent pubs late Saturday, said Luis Fernando Dorado, head of Bogota emergency services.

Three of the wounded were US citizens, a secret police source said. Staff of the US Embassy arrived at the scene but did not comment.

The source, who did not wish to be named, said a guard in the vicinity had captured a person who planted one of the explosive devices.

President Alvaro Uribe mourned for the victims, and vowed to defeat the "terrorists" behind the attacks.

"This attack in Bogota breaks my heart, it's more suffering for my fellow citizens. I ask God to give us all strength and the endurance to defeat terrorism," Uribe said.

"With terrorism, there's only one way: continue on the road to defeating it. With sacrifices, we can overcome obstacles. With persistence, we're going to succeed," he said.

The explosions, which occurred seconds apart just after 10:20 p.m., when the upmarket "Zona Rosa" area was crowded with restaurant- and bar-goers.

The scene was chaotic as emergency personnel rushed the wounded to medical centers in Bogota, which have treated victims of numerous bomb blasts in the last two years.

On Oct. 8, a car bomb exploded in the south of the capital, killing six and injuring 21.

On Feb. 7, a car bomb attack at an elegant club in the city killed 36 and injured 170. The attack was blamed on the leftist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, though the rebel group denied responsibility.

Authorities say they have seized tons of explosives and detained dozens of FARC guerrillas in recent months in Bogota.

Several explosions rocked the capital in 2002, including one on Aug. 7, during President Alvaro Uribe's inauguration. That blast killed 21, wounded 70 and damaged a wing of the Palace of Government.

The latest attacks come after a month of upheaval and setbacks for the popular president.

Three key cabinet members and the heads of the military and police resigned in the past two weeks, after Uribe last month lost a referendum on measures he had proposed to reform Colombian institutions and help wage war on rebels. *AFP*

Microsoft doubles R&D fund

LAS VEGAS, Nevada—Microsoft has doubled its research and development budget in five years to $6.8 billion in the current fiscal year, Bill Gates said here Sunday.

Gates, addressing thousands of people on the eve of the Comdex technology trade show, previewed a series of new products Microsoft will be presenting to technology buyers in the exhibit hall.

They include new spam-filtering software, called SmartScreen, which is already being used in Outlook 2003 and Hotmail, Microsoft's free e-mail service on the MSN portal.

SmartScreen evaluates each incoming e-mail based on the habits of the user, and blocks those deemed undesirable, Gates explained.

He also introduced Microsoft's new Systems Management Server 2003 for professional information technology administrators, launched last week.

Another new product, the ISA Server 2004, will be available next year—an improved firewall to protect networks from unwanted Internet connections. Gates has kicked off Comdex with a keynote speech each year since 1983.

And although the 2003 edition is vastly scaled back from the glitzy gadget galas of recent years, reflecting hard times in the high-tech sector, Microsoft's founder waxed poetic about the future of computing. *AFP*

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CALIFORNIA Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger thanks members of his transition team in Sacramento on Nov. 16. REUTERS

Schwarzenegger faces greatest adversary

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Arnold Schwarzenegger, who has lifted countless weighty barbells and vanquished numerous screen adversaries, now faces what may well prove the greatest challenge of his multifaceted career.

Without a single day of experience in elected office, the Austrian-born actor becomes California's governor at 11 a.m. on Monday and immediately faces the task of fixing an economy hampered by growing state spending amid slower growth.

Even as aides planned the final details for his inaugural on Friday, the state's legislative analyst said California's budget gap would hit $17.8 billion in the next fiscal year if Schwarzenegger repeals an unpopular hike in car taxes, which he has promised to do almost immediately.

Since his commanding Oct. 7 election, the former Mr. Universe has attempted to extend the olive branch to his Democratic adversaries, who saw their party's Gov. Gray Davis ousted in a recall for the first time in state history.

Although many in both parties saw the actor's charms on the campaign trail as unstoppable, few can say what kind of governor he will end up being. Supporters say the same determination that turned an Austrian village lad into an international superstar will bring him success in politics.

"His goal setting was just phenomenal," said Barbara Outland Baker, Schwarzenegger's girlfriend from 1969-75 as his fame grew. "Every New Year's Day he would sit there with his index cards and create goals, and they were absurd goals."

"He almost accomplished every single one of them."

Running for office for the first time, Republican Schwarzenegger, 56, won 48.6 percent of the vote among candidates to replace Davis. In a strongly Democratic state, his closest Democratic opponent garnered just 31.5 percent.

"Can you believe it? Only in America!" an overjoyed Schwarzenegger told two reporters on election eve. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

French UN worker killed

KABUL—A 29-year-old French woman working for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was shot dead on Sunday in the Afghan town of Ghazni when two men on a motorcycle opened fire on her vehicle with a pistol. Bettina Goislard's death was the first among UN international staff in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban to US-led forces two years ago. Local authorities in the town to the southwest of the capital Kabul have arrested two gunmen and said they believed the killers were rebels from the ousted Taliban regime which has staged a comeback in parts of the country in recent months. *Reuters*

New bioweapons

WASHINGTON—A group of US scientists has warned the Central Intelligence Agency that recent advances in biotechnology could give life to "designer" biological weapons able to target selected groups of people, act with a delay and turn deadly in reaction to medicine, according to a CIA document made public here. The warning came during a closed-door seminar organized at the request of the CIA by the National Academy of Sciences to devise strategies for dealing with the dangerous by-products of the so-called genomic revolution. "The effects of some of these engineered biological agents could be worse than any disease known to man," the CIA report warned. Scientists have cautioned that explosive growth in knowledge about genes and their functions could make traditional means of monitoring weapons of mass destruction obsolete, according to the document. This could make weapons that currently exist only in science fiction novels real over the next decade. *AFP*

Chopstick in man's face

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysian surgeons treating a man for an eye infection said they were surprised to find part of a chopstick embedded in his face—the result of an assault five years ago. Doctors at a government hospital in the northern city of Ipoh said they found the section of a wooden chopstick lodged in tissue between his eyes during exploratory surgery to remove an unknown foreign object, the national new agency, Bernama, reported. Dr. Gurdeep Singh Mann, the hospital's senior eye, nose and throat specialist, said the man, Ng Keng Choon, 30, was lucky to be alive because the chopstick had been nudging against his brain. *AP*

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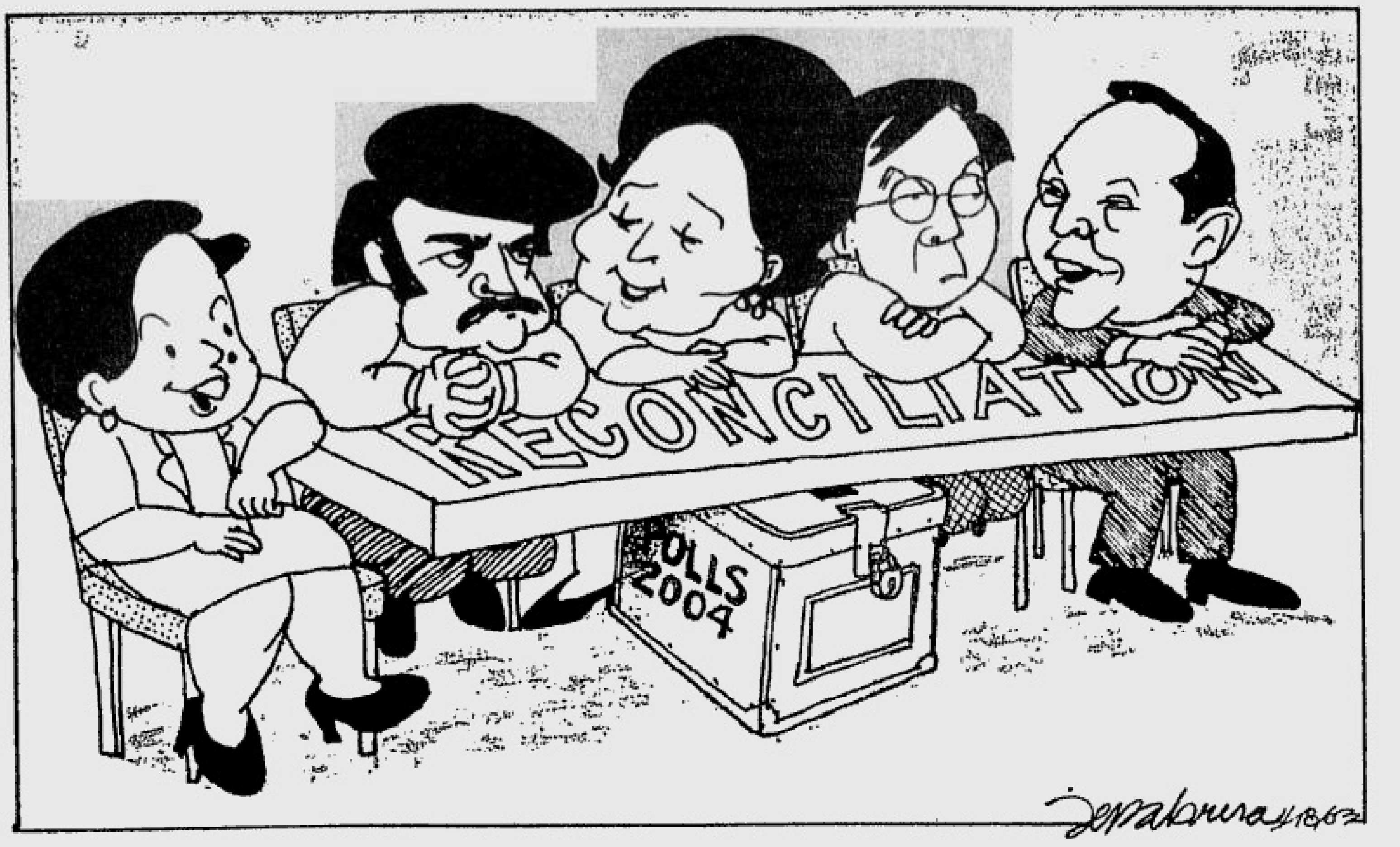

EDITORIALS

Accommodation

ABOUT 10,000 supporters of deposed President Joseph Estrada clashed with the police last Wednesday on Ayala Avenue in the heart of the country's financial district. Two days later, President Macapagal-Arroyo was reported to have offered to send the disgraced former president to the United States for medical treatment. At first Malacañang denied the report, but later two high-ranking presidential aides confirmed it.

This is a reversal of the former stand of the Macapagal administration that Estrada can undergo surgery and treatment at the hands of competent Filipino doctors here. Have the circumstances changed since then? No, it's just that the President has changed her mind and is running in the May elections.

It is obvious that the President continues to be fearful of the potential of the pro-Estrada forces to destabilize her administration. By agreeing to let Estrada leave for the US, she could remove a continuing source of political instability. And as a bonus, she could obtain the support of the pro-Estrada Iglesia ni Cristo and El Shaddai in her election bid.

The President has often spoken of principles: "a principled resolution" of the Davide impeachment case, and "principled reconciliation" with political groups and personalities like the Marcoses, the Estradas, Eduardo M. Cojuangco and Panfilo Lacson.

One principle here may be that of the humane treatment of detainees. That may be applicable here, as it was applicable in the case of Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., who was allowed by the dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos to leave for the US for treatment of a diseased heart. But one cannot help entertaining the fear that a medical furlough in the US may be part of a bigger political settlement that could see Estrada, who is facing a plunder charge, going scot-free. Presumably, if the US trip is approved, he will stay abroad until the 2004 elections. He might not even have to continue undergoing a trial before the Sandiganbayan.

At this point, Estrada is presumed innocent. But won't a political settlement keep the plunder case hanging? The nation won't ever know if he indeed committed plunder. Similarly, a "principled reconciliation" with the Marcoses would leave the cases to recover their unexplained wealth without a closure. They would continue laughing their way to the bank, withdrawing money that may have been plundered from the country's treasury.

A "principled reconciliation" with Danding Cojuangco would also keep the resolution of the controversial coco levy funds hanging. The poor coconut farmers would never get justice. And a "principled reconciliation" with Lacson would keep the Kuratong Baleleng case and other human rights cases against him unresolved.

We suggest that the administration maintain its original stand: that Estrada can get competent medical treatment at the hands of Filipino doctors. And if his supporters create trouble, then they should be met with the full force of the law, as they were so treated during the May 1, 2001 "Edsa 3" rampage and during last week's violent rally on Ayala.

The principle here is that the law must take its course, and no backdoor solution such as a US medical furlough should be resorted to to get Estrada off the hook. This is the first case where the biggest fish of all, a former president, is being tried for corruption. Are we going to forego this opportunity just to serve the political ends of a President who is running for a full term?

World-class

MANNY Pacquiao, a 3-1 pre-fight underdog, surprised the world and a highly touted Antonio Barrera when he pounded the latter to an 11th round technical knockout in San Antonio, Texas, the other day. It was just the thing that a nation, battered by all sorts of negative developments the past month, needed to lift its spirits.

Pacquiao showed that a Filipino can do it, if only he sets his mind on an objective. He prepared long and hard for the fight of his life. On the ring he started like a whirlwind, attacking relentlessly, punching rapidly and running rings around his befuddled opponent. A wrong call by the referee crediting his opponent with a knockdown for what was clearly a slip didn't faze Pacquiao; it only made him more determined to pound Barrera to submission.

Pacquiao showed his countrymen and the world what are needed to attain world-class status: a clear objective, will power, determination, preparation and hard work. We hope that now that he has attained his first big goal, he will stay focused and go on to score more and greater victories.

GMA has no authority to let Erap go abroad

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IT is not for President Macapagal-Arroyo or for Speaker Jose de Venecia or congressmen to allow former President Estrada to go to the United States for knee operations. Only the Sandiganbayan, which is trying the plunder case against him, has the authority to do that. The President is not too dumb not to know that, but she made the statement obviously as a signal to the Sandigan to let him go.

But if the Sandigan, after repeatedly turning a deaf ear to Erap's pleas, suddenly lets him go, that would be an admission that it is not independent and that it is under the thumb of Malacañang. Besides, if Erap doesn't come back here, just like Rod Strunk, it would be the Sandigan, not Malacañang, that would be blamed by the people. So the Sandiganbayan is put on the spot.

The Department of Justice and the private prosecutors are also put on the spot. If they don't object to Erap's petition, as GMA wants, and Erap flies the coop, they would get the ire of the people. On the other hand, if they go against the President's wishes, that could be the end of their careers—at least during the Macapagal administration (what remains of it and the next term, if she is reelected).

And that is exactly what she wants to happen—get reelected—by letting Erap leave. She may already have entered an agreement with Erap (although both sides will surely deny it) not to destabilize her administration or campaign against her in exchange for letting him go. Besides, with Erap out of the country, there would be nobody for his supporters to rally around. And nobody to bankroll and support FPJ's candidacy. The longer he stays in the US, the better for GMA. Erap would be forgotten, just like Nur Misuari who has been put in limbo in a military camp in Laguna.

"Reconciliation" is just another word for electioneering.

* * *

If the Sandigan lets Erap go, it would have to let Imelda go also for an operation on her own knee. The government may also have to share the Marcos loot with the looters and drop the criminal and civil cases against them—all in the name of reconciliation. It may also betray the coconut farmers by letting Danding Cojuangco have the coco levy fund, again for the sake of reconciliation.

Isn't that sleeping with the enemy? Of course it is. But politics is addition and if that will help get GMA reelected, so what? Winning is the top priority next year. Everything else, including morality, takes a back seat. For if she loses, there would be a lot of government officials who would be out of jobs.

* * *

Were you able to register last week? No? You were discouraged by the huge crowds in the municipal halls and went home? You weren't able to revalidate your registration either? Never mind, revalidation is not needed to be able to vote next year, said Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and Metro Manila director Ferdinand Rafanan who were the guests at yesterday's Kapihan sa Manila.

Revalidation only makes it easier and faster for you to vote. Without it, you would still be allowed to vote, but you would have to go through some red tape. Besides, there will be other days to revalidate. There may or may not be an extension for those who were unable to register.

According to Abalos and Rafanan, there was a 20 percent increase in the number of voters in Metro Manila because of the new voters. That was unusually big. They expected only a 10 percent increase, they said.

Is that an indication of flying voters? They can try, but they won't succeed, replied the two Comelec officials. Computerization will catch them. They have already caught 20,000 double and underaged registrants, mostly in Mindanao, home of birds and bees that vote. Charges are now being readied against them. Those who are convicted will go to jail.

But they can still avoid jail by turning state witness and executing affidavits identifying those who prevailed upon them to register more than once, Abalos said. Ten double registrants in Caloocan already did.

It is probable that many of these double registrants were transferees. They registered in Metro Manila although they were already registered in the provinces without telling the Comelec about it. If that is the case, just say so, advised Abalos. Maybe they didn't know they have to do that. Maybe they thought they have to go back to the province to have their old registration canceled. That is not necessary, Abalos said. Just tell the Comelec you are already registered in your home province but would like to vote in your new address in the city. The computer will do the rest.

In short, honesty is the best policy. Just tell the truth. After all, you cannot vote in Metro Manila and also in Mindanao on the same day. Too expensive to fly for just two votes.

But if you are already registered in Mandaluyong and register again in Marikina, that is different. That means you intended to cheat, Mandaluyong and Marikina being close enough for you to vote twice.

You would be caught if you tried. The computer records your picture, fingerprints and signature, and it can find matches elsewhere within seconds. Then it's jail for you. So don't try it.

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: FPJ was attending an international conference on the justice system.

"Do you have any parole in the Philippines?" he was asked by a delegate.

"Of course," FPJ replied, "we hang them from our windows during Christmas."

Postscript to a tragedy

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I WOULDN'T have responded to Jose Adolfo Mariquit's letter (published last Friday) but I figure there are a lot of important issues involved there not to.

Mariquit says he cannot understand my logic, which is consistent with the GMA administration's, that Panfilo Villaruel posed a grave and present danger. "Obviously, just for the sake of argument, all domestic flights to and from Manila would have been canceled. And obviously again, all incoming international flights into Manila would have been diverted to either Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore, Clark Field, or Cebu even—with at least five hours to spare. In fact, the first instructions given then by the former Air Transportation Office (ATO) chief was for all flights to be diverted to Clark or Cebu."

Mariquit goes on to say that the ATO tower is "not the be-all of air traffic control in the Philippines," and "to postulate that the perpetrators could send malicious messages to incoming traffic is a pathetic and weak argument." All Villaruel wanted "was merely to be heard." He didn't deserve a bloodbath. "That's what happens when strategic decisions are left to near-sighted tactical theorists hell-bent on making a big bang."

Well, to begin with, I do not particularly care if I happen to share the administration's view on an issue. I call things as I see them. I do not start out the day looking at the administration's position and taking the opposite view, which seems to be the case with some of its critics.

I agree: The authorities should have examined their options first. They should not have shot first and asked questions later. I did say so in my column. Villaruel's kin may not believe me, but I do grieve his passing.

But I will not agree that that was an uncalibrated response to a perfectly calibrated provocation. My position was, is and will be that that was an uncalibrated response to a perfectly uncalibrated provocation. I will not agree that Villaruel's action did not pose a grave and present danger. And I will not agree that instead of condemning his action, we should extol it as a brave and patriotic act, like Ninoy Aquino's decision to return to this country.

I can understand Villaruel's frustration. I have been writing columns for the last decade and a half, often with anger and outrage, only to see things go from bad to worse. Thus far, I have not inveigled people to help me takeover an office in Malacañang to better press my point. For all its imperviousness to truth, this country still offers ways for people to get heard. Chavit Singson got heard, which led to the impeachment of Erap. I did suggest that if Antonio Trillanes and company had done the same thing instead of taking over Oakwood, they might have gotten GMA impeached. They had the credibility, they knew whereof they spoke. So did Villaruel.

That they might not have been listened to by no means justifies taking over a building in Makati, or worse an airport tower. That Villaruel had no insidious plans is hindsight, and like I said, hindsight is always 20-20 vision. Not so foresight. Why should it be inconceivable that Villaruel and Catchillar could send malicious messages to incoming traffic? Because they were peaceable people? We knew that only after the fact. Peaceable people do not take over airport towers, whether it be the be-all of all air traffic in the Philippines or not. That act by itself, done in the dark of night, rules out peaceability.

Mariquit refutes himself. Someone who takes over an airport tower and whose first instruction is to divert all flights to Subic or Cebu does **not** pose a grave and present danger to airport traffic? I don't think only the passengers of airplanes who get diverted to Subic or Cebu will violently protest that idea.

The comparison with Ninoy is ridiculous. First, Ninoy did not pose any threat to others when he came home; he posed a threat only to himself. Well, he posed a threat as well to Marcos, which was the reason Marcos had him gunned down. Villaruel's taking over an airport tower did pose a threat to others, if you look at it from the perspective of when it was happening and not after. His death was a tragedy, but it may be asked if Mariquit's conclusion about the raiding team does not apply as well to Villaruel: "That's what happens when strategic decisions are left to near-sighted tactical theorists hell-bent on making a big bang."

Infinitely more importantly, Ninoy had no choice. There were precious few options in removing Marcos from power. If doing it demanded a personal sacrifice of life, well Ninoy was willing to take the risk. We on the other hand do not lack for ways to remove GMA from power and end a rule given to iniquity and corruption. We can always not vote for her next year. Or if you want to do more, you can always campaign against her, fight the Comelec's shenanigans, or campaign for somebody else. Ninoy lived in dictatorial times, Villaruel did not.

I sympathize with Villaruel, but I do not extol his deed, I condemn it. Glossing over the insidiousness and horribleness of his act of seizing an airport tower, whatever his reasons, is the most dangerous thing in the world. That is only a step away from saying that military officers have every right to take violent action against government, whatever its consequences, whatever harm it may pose to civilians, so long as they have legitimate grievances, good intentions and reasonable claims to idealism. That is only a step away from saying coup plotters have every reason to carry out their coups, so long as they can say they have no plans to stay in power for very long, all they want is to stamp out corruption and give this country another chance.

That I'll never buy.

More good news

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

BUDAPEST, Hungary—We were in Austria briefly to attend the gala awards night of the Energy Globe Award, where the PNOC bagged the first prize in one of the five major categories for its solar homes systems project for Philippine rural barangays which had no electricity. From Vienna we flew to Frankfurt for our flight back to Asia, but over the weekend we made a side trip to Budapest, the capital of Hungary.

To illustrate how important is the role of the international news networks in projecting a country, we were in the quaint artists' town of Szentendre, about 20 minutes' drive from Budapest, famous for its preserved village dating back hundreds of years, where the characteristic architecture and folk art of different regions are displayed for sale. In one store, a Spanish-speaking, Hungarian proprietor, upon learning that we are Filipinos, was thrilled to meet us. He had just watched on TV the boxing match between our own champ, Manny Pacquiao, and the Mexican featherweight champion Marco Antonio Barrera in Texas. The Hungarian was very much impressed with Pacquiao, illustrating the latter's powerful jabs and how he knocked the fight out of his opponent. He enjoyed watching Pacquiao so much, even though he couldn't pronounce his name.

On the other hand, his assistant knew that the Philippines is the land of "beautiful women" and that we have for a President "a very tiny woman who is very tough and very smart" (put a finger to his temple as he uttered the phrase). But he also knew that GMA has "a lot of problems, mostly from her enemies."

* * *

More good news on the international front: the famed Loboc Children's Choir (LCC) of Bohol garnered two major awards at the "Europe and its Songs 6th International Folksong Choir Festival" in Barcelona, Spain, a few weeks back. The Filipino choir bagged the first prize and gold medal with a 97.5 percent rating in the children's choir category, beating 13 other groups. It was also awarded by the international jury the "Europe and its Songs 2003 Cup" for achieving the highest mark, surpassing those of 12 other international adult choirs from the United States and Europe. The competition was held in the old church of Sta. Maria del Pi, near the famed "Rambla" of Barcelona, and the LCC's repertoire included "Ugoy sa Duyan" by Lucio San Pedro; "Ampeu Se-lo" by James Swu; "La Pastoret a Catalan," as arranged by Ed Manguiat; "Leron, Leron Sinta" and the "Ave Maria." Its musical director was Alma Fernando Taldo and the piano accompanist was Baby Lina Jana. The LCC, now winding up its three-month tour of Europe, dubbed "Tubod, A Musical Journey for Heritage and Peace," is composed of 25 kids, ages 10 to 13 years, from the Loboc Central Elementary School. Their parish priest, Fr. Desiderio Magoza, is accompanying them.

I heard the LCC last year at the week-long annual Bohol festival of arts, upon the invitation of Cecile Guidote Alvarez, where I helped judge a sailboat painting contest under the auspices of then DENR Secretary Heherson Alvarez. The concert featuring those angelic kids as well as New York-based Filipino classical guitarist Michael Dadap was held at the beautiful Loboc Church, which is famous for its ceiling frescoes. It was like heaven.

* * *

I must confess that over the years I have concentrated on Western Europe and ignored the old Eastern Bloc countries, but in recent years I have tried to rectify that error with a visit to Prague in 2000 and now to Budapest. The 1,100-year-old Hungary, lying in the Carpathian basin in the heart of Europe, is famous for its natural and historic beauty and diverse scenic spots, well-preserved culture and crafts and its cuisine spiced with the ever-present paprika. We took in everything we could see on a weekend visit, and loved every minute of it, impressed by how Budapest and environs has preserved their monuments. But I discovered a historical footnote that would please Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon: A thousand years ago, Hungary's first king and founder, St. Stephen, decreed the protection of foreign pilgrims traveling through the country and guaranteed their safety and provision. Until today they seem to take St. Stephen's decree to heart, for Budapest's petty crime rate against foreigners is much less than, say, in Bulgaria and the countries once belonging to the old Yugoslavia.

We got together with our former media colleague and now ambassador Andy del Rosario, who invited us to a delicious pink salmon and paella dinner at his modern flat by the Danube River. But the main attraction was the fabulous view his place offers of the gothic-style Parliament building across the river, truly one of the most beautiful in the world. Even though we were in the heart of Budapest, the dinner-table talk invariably gravitated to Philippine politics, as usual.

* * *

The wonder of the roaming cell phone is that you are accessible anywhere you are. Northern Samar Gov. Raul Daza called up to point out some statistics from Liberal Party president Butch Abad. In the recent voting on Speaker Jose de Venecia's motion to follow the Supreme Court ruling declaring as unconstitutional the impeachment move against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., Lakas delivered 88 percent of its party vote, but highest support among the coalition groups came from the Liberals, who delivered 94 percent (only Northern Samar LP Rep. Harlyn Abayon voted against it, believing that the SC ruling diminished the authority of the House). On the other hand, the NPC delivered 89 percent of its vote against the SC ruling, while the LDP, led by Carlos Padilla, voted 78 percent against it.

Equal but not equal

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHAT struck me as particularly galling in the entire Davide impeachment controversy was the posturing of legislators who not only invoked the "rule of law" in pursuing their flimsy case but even dared take the moral high ground by invoking the need for "transparency" in the disbursement of the Judiciary Development Fund.

This, even after the Commission on Audit had issued a report clearing the Chief Justice and the Supreme Court of any irregularity in the use of the money. And, as countless callers to radio and TV public affairs shows reminded the lawmakers, Congress was not itself entirely transparent or accountable with regard to the use of funds allocated to its members.

It seems quite arrogant and hypocritical, indeed, for the House members to have even dared challenge the Supreme Court's fiscal independence. After all, Congress has been decidedly niggardly when it comes to providing for the sustenance of a supposedly equal and independent branch of government.

Though it has the final "say" on the legality or constitutionality of all acts and decrees of the two other branches, the judiciary is conceded to be the weakest of the three branches of government. This is especially clear when we consider the judicial branch's share of the budget. The judiciary gets less than one percent of the total government budget, which is why it must draw from its own income to provide for the cost-of-living allowances of its employees and the upkeep of its quarters and equipment.

If Congress is really all that concerned about the welfare of court employees for whom their hearts are suddenly bleeding, then they should allocate more money to the judiciary without having to be asked.

The bill raising the salaries of judges is fine and good, but it still does not address the fundamental inequity among the three branches.

* * *

SHORTLY after my graduation with a journalism degree from the University of Santo Tomas, I was taken on as an instructor on newswriting and feature writing in the same institution. Just before I was to begin teaching, I received a phone call from Joe Burgos, at that time already a veteran reporter (for the Manila Times that was shut down by martial law) and publisher of a struggling "alternative" newspaper, Malaya.

Burgos explained that he was pursuing a master's degree in Development Communications in another institution but needed my help to accomplish his goal. His problem was that, like many journalists of his generation, he got derailed from his studies after he was taken in as a reporter and thus failed to get his undergraduate degree in journalism from his alma mater, UST. He needed a few more units in college to "graduate," so he asked me if he could take my class without having to actually sit through it.

I was a fresh graduate with no real journalism experience to speak of, save for a stint on the campus paper. The thought of having a "real" journalist, whose by-line I was already familiar with, sit in my class as my student intimidated me no end. "It would be an honor to give you a grade," I told him, "and please, you don't have to attend any of my classes. In fact, I'm begging you not to!"

He laughed and that was that. Joe had already made arrangements with the department head, and I thought it was telling of the man's sense of propriety that he would seek to personally clear things with a young, inexperienced instructor with the ink barely dry on her diploma.

When the time came for grading, however, I thought I couldn't in conscience give someone who'd never set foot in my classroom a top grade, so I gave him a middling grade of "2." It became a sort of inside joke between us since.

I would know Joe Burgos even better in years to come, since we both became members of the Catholic Press Association of the Philippines, at that time the only press organization that was willing to take under its wing a maverick publisher who dared take on the Marcos propaganda machine.

And through the years, Malaya proved to be not just a brave, feisty paper, but a newspaper worthy of its predecessors in the pre-martial law press. It soon attracted young, courageous journalists and became a training ground for many of the better reporters, columnists and editors today.

* * *

THERE was a running joke in the days of the "alternative" press that blossomed after the Ninoy Aquino assassination that centered around the folks working for Malaya. Apparently, whenever they complained about their low pay and primitive working conditions, Joe Burgos would admonish them that they were working not just for themselves and their families but also "*para sa bayan*" (for the country). "*Para sa bayan*" thus became a catchphrase among the young reporters of the "alternative" press whenever working conditions became too horrendous or dangerous. It was a joke, but also a rallying cry, albeit one issuing from the mouths of a cynical lot.

Ironically, after the Edsa Revolt and the sudden mushrooming of independent newspapers, Joe Burgos decided to step down as publisher of Malaya, retire from journalism and assume the life of a gentleman farmer. But even in this capacity, he was far from quiet, being an outspoken advocate of organic farming and sustainable agriculture.

Still, even years after his departure from active newspapering (though he continued to write columns on his life in the farm), Joe Burgos remained an icon of Philippine journalism. He became a symbol of the "Power of One," the power of an individual who, by persistence and a kind of stubbornness in the face of mundane "reality," managed, in ways beyond even his dreaming, to change the world. We'll miss you, Joe.

For under the Christmas tree: 2 books

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

MORE than 50 years after the Liberation, more personal recollections regarding World War II are being published. I find this significant because we Filipinos tend to relegate unpleasant events to the dustbin of memory and fail to internalize what otherwise should teach us valuable lessons. In not facing our demons frontally (Have you ever heard a president tell us we're broke and we need an austerity program? Of course, the people have been on austerity for quite some time. Now about their officials...), we deny ourselves (for want of a better word) closure. (Will someone please come up with a more palatable term?) Needless to say, we keep repeating the same mistakes.

(As an aside, there is, for instance, an extremely interesting diary of a Manileño with an illustrious name who survived Bataan. The man identifies in no uncertain terms those he considered collaborators. In the expurgated form, all these opinions are deleted. Thus the "amnesty" for collaborators continues. It also makes for much less vibrant reading.)

Dr. Benito Legarda's "Occupation '42" is one such addition to a growing list, but in this case it is more than a recollection. Aside from accounts of an ordinary soldier's experience back from the front or the forms of transport in wartime Manila, the author takes up the subject of the responsibility of the Japanese for the destruction of Manila, with the accompanying acts of brutality and their lack of acknowledgment of that fact. While the Japanese attitude is understandable, what isn't acceptable is our own strange reaction toward the matter.

The essays, which were first published in the daily Manila Meteor and the Philippine Free Press, are short (three to four pages) and the book is handy enough to take around with you so you can read while you're stuck in traffic. Many of the photos may not have been published before and may be new to people since they came from a private collection.

The manner is likewise less scholarly and more informal. Legarda relies on his late father's diary, his mother's notes and the memories of his last surviving aunt.

The fact that most books about the war are "by Americans, about Americans and for Americans" should encourage you to read Legarda since, as he points out, 85 percent of the troops in Bataan were Filipinos. Having suffered the war, the author is appalled at the fact that countless Filipinos do not seem to be aware of what happened and the repercussions. There are those who claim that the sorry state of things in our country today can be traced back to the loss of 100,000 Manileños, who were massacred during Liberation, and the amnesty granted the collaborators.

In case you're thinking of sending presents to officials at the Department of Foreign Affairs, this should be at the top of your list. It may help them rethink some of their celebrations, like Filipino-Japanese Friendship Month.

Another book that elicits different responses from its readers is "Ramon V. Del Rosario: The Making of an Entrepreneur." A friend who had read it before I did said she was enthralled by the history of the Del Rosarios in the 19th century and how Salvador and Mariano were part of the Filipino ilustrados in Europe, members of the Propaganda Movement and later of the Malolos Congress. I, on the other hand, was struck by Ramon Del Rosario as part of that generation of young men who after the war looked up to America and yet returned home from their studies because there was a future for them.

To read through the various enterprises that Del Rosario established is to see that there was a time when the Filipino entrepreneur's vision of wealth could be realized without having to come from wealth or belonging to a political family. Possibilities abounded then and the enthusiasm of these young men, in the light of our present difficulties, somehow clarifies how and why we were No. 2 in Asia at one point.

It's an interesting introduction to names that belong to our economic history: Jobo Fernandez, Leo Virata, Earl Carroll, Charlie Palanca, Filemon Rodriguez, Ting Roxas, Bong Tanco and how some enterprises were established and developed such as Fil-Am Life, IBM Philippines, Del Rosario Brothers, Filoil (the country's first Filipino oil refinery), and of course, Phinma. It also traces the policies that in the end made some of them fail.

Skillfully written by Roel Landigin, a free-lance business journalist, who has been a correspondent for Financial Times, a bureau chief for Bloomberg News and contributor to Newsbreak, the narrative chronicles the life and times of business pioneer Ramon Del Rosario, his triumphs as well as his failures. To a great extent it is a much more honest book than many so-called biographies that have been published lately.

The idea of the biography came as a tribute by his family to Del Rosario on his 85th birthday and because Ramon Jr. felt his father is "an irrepressible storyteller and he wanted a record of some of these anecdotes and ideas." More importantly, he wanted "the story behind and the substance within."

It is indeed a fitting tribute to the pioneering businessman.

Manila Bay sunset rediscovered

YOUNG BLOOD

Marfe D. Paluga

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

HE asked me what time sunset would be, and I was amused because it sounded like he was asking for the square root of 25, or any question to which there was a clear answer. I said, "I don't know, silly."

Maybe he did not notice my amusement because he suggested, "Ask the driver then."

Of course, I did not ask the taxi driver. Sunset doesn't come with precision of 5 p.m., when employees rush to punch their time cards. "Here, the sun sets whenever it likes to," I told him with a smile.

Earlier, we thought we would not make it on time, but looking at the sky as we turned toward Roxas Boulevard, he said, "I think we still have one hour."

It was the first time for both of us to see the sunset on Manila Bay. He is from Seattle, and I am from Quezon City, but I had never bothered before to wait for the sun to set on Manila Bay, knowing that it would always be there, available for me when I finally have the time. Now that he insisted, I went along although I had a lot of papers to file at the office. After all, he was my visitor.

I already knew there were "friendly" benches along the boulevard, but I never appreciated them until the time we were there. Aides were sweeping the dirt and collecting trash, and there was a police officer nearby. It didn't look like the same old place that people used to avoid. Now, colorful atom-like lights lent the place a festive air and the eateries, with their music "motifs" helped create a lively yet relaxed feeling. The place seemed to say, "You deserve to take a break from the city. Come and sit down."

I would say everyone should take time to enjoy the Manila Bay sunset. Indeed, as many others have said before, it is beautiful. Amid the noise, the traffic and the notoriety of an overcrowded city, the sunset soothes and strips our watches of their capacity to make us hurry. We count the seconds by the almost unnoticeable descent of the glorious sun into the welcoming line created by the distant waters. We take note of the passing time by the changing of colors of the pastel sky, now fiery orange, now pink, and then a subtle red. To a city person, time can never be as friendly as this.

We were silent for some time, just taking in the scene before us. He tried some angles with the camera, wanting to take back home the glory of the sunset. I let him be, knowing his artistic spirit.

Near me, another man who must have been in his 50s was also trying our different views. He too had a camera, an old model which professional photographers still use. I smiled because I thought only Tony and me were new to the place—and maybe this man, too.

When Tony came, he told me, "It is beautiful."

"Yes," I replied, while looking straight into his eyes, almost seeing there the colors of the sunset and multiplying its grandeur.

I turned my gaze back to the scene and sighed. I wished I could see it every day to temper the worries and weariness of city life.

We sat on the bench for some time after the sun had set. The calm that the sunset left behind clung to us.

People were everywhere: mothers carrying toddlers or pushing baby carts, children running ahead of their parents, old men walking slowly like they were looking for shells in the sand, school girls looking for vacant benches, cigarette and peanut vendors trying to make a sale. What made me smile were the small boys and girls persistently asking my companion to buy me a flower. I told them we were not interested.

I noticed the other women doing the same thing. However, I suspect that they actually wanted to be given a flower, especially in the peaceful and romantic ambience provided by the sunset. But then maybe we were just being practical. After all, being with your guy and watching the sunset was worth more than a rose offering.

Tony reached out for my hand. "You see, honey," he said, "you thought that I was not coming. Now, I am here."

I looked at him and smiled. I could not say anything. But I wished he saw the joy in my smile, and the prayer that came with it. I blew a prayer to the sun that we two would always be together, that we would have sunsets like this to smoothen out the unavoidable arguments and misunderstandings in a relationship.

"I love you, honey," I said. I groped for the most suitable line to express my feelings, but is there such a line? The love that I felt, like a Manila Bay sunset, could not be completely captured in words; it is always growing and going on and on and on.

"I am glad that I met you," he told me. He kissed my fingers, and I felt as if I were the sunset, admired by everyone. I could almost see myself glowing beautifully with all the shades of pink and red and orange.

"Me too, honey, me too," I replied. There can be no other suitable reply than that. It was really what I feel. I wanted to tell him that I was very happy, but I wasn't able to say so. I felt so heavy and so light with love.

When I focused my attention back on the horizon, the sun was no longer there. Only the subtle blowing of the wind and the faint crashing of the waves could be heard. Then slowly, like I was being transported back to earth, I heard the sounds of vehicles, the footsteps of passing people, the voices of the vendors and the casual conversations of other people.

To me it looked as if everyone there had their burdens lifted off their shoulders. The office bags of working women were stuffed with papers, but they didn't seem to be carrying its weight, unlike when you see them waiting for their ride on busy streets. Their make-up may be fading because it's already the end of day, but they looked more beautiful, more open, refreshed.

We stood up and strolled, holding hands, until we reached the food stall. "Let's eat by the bay," he said. Dinner by the bay, with the glow of the sunset still clinging to us, the breeze from the sea, music in the background, colorful lights on the boulevard, an assortment of gay people relaxing at the end of the day, and the two of us, now much strengthened by the rays the powerful sun had left behind, completed our night.

Marfe D. Paluga, 28, works as a veterinarian at the Bureau of Animal Industry. She loves animals and likes to paint.

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Time to abolish the Judiciary Development Fund?

A REMNANT of martial law, P.D. 1949, the legal basis of the JDF. The lamented Judiciary Development Fund, was a crisis management measure intended to make sure the justices of the Supreme Court always agreed with then President Marcos, who ruled by decree.

The decree authorized the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, then former General Fred Ruiz Castro, to charge fees from litigants who go to court. Since then, not only fees for services rendered were charged on litigants. In civil cases, litigants paid docket fees. These have soared to close to P9,000 per P1-million claim. Criminal cases required no such docket fees. Not any more. Now, litigants pay docket fees in BP 22 or the bouncing checks and *estafa* cases. For postponements, we pay P100.

There is a new source of funds. In lieu of imprisonment, convicts just pay double the fine. For instance, in a case involving BP 22, the convict was ordered to pay the value of the bouncing checks of P77,000 and a penalty of P154,000. The P154,000, which is double the amount of the checks payable to the creditor, goes to the court. The court remits the amount to the JDF. The same penalty of fines is now imposed on minor offenses in lieu of imprisonment. These changes in the service of criminal penalties were not legislated by Congress. They were merely imposed unilaterally by the Supreme Court with the aim in view of raising funds for the JDF, without public hearing.

Do you wonder why in a short period of time, the JDF doubled from a mere P800 million to P1.6 billion.

This judicial legislation has to stop. It is time to refer the JDF once again to congressional oversight.

To put the JDF in perspective, let us look at the Special Education Fund. This fund comes from an additional one percent tax on real properties. The SEF is disbursed by the Local School Boards of each city, municipality and province. It is chaired by the mayor or governor and the school division superintendent, with members, representative of the teachers' federation, employees' association, parents, SK and the council. In other words, there is democratic representation and decision making in the disbursement of the SEF for school and education purposes. The SEF is not small. In Quezon City, this is P814 million, in Manila, it is P480 million, in Marikina City it is P90 million, in Antipolo City, it is P150 million.

Not so with the JDF. No court employees, or the rank and file, sit in the disbursing group. Only the Chief Justice and some justices decide what to do with the money.

Abolish the JDF and end forever the squabbles involving the fund. Raise the salaries of court employees by at least P3,000 a month across the board, which is the equivalent of their allowances during the regime of the JDF. But these raises should be appropriated by Congress through the General Appropriations Act.

—GREGORIO T. FABROS,
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College of ABSP

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Body counts

"WE don't do body counts," Gen. Tommy Franks of the US Central Command, which directs the war in Iraq, was once quoted as saying. Now it's the American press that's doing the body counts, reporting on the steadily increasing number of American soldiers dying in combat.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

The last time I wrote about Iraq in mid-October, the US troops killed numbered 338. As of last weekend, the casualties had exceeded 400.

Bush reacted last month, chastising the American mass media for concentrating on negative news rather than on the benefits Iraqis have gained since the Americans occupied their country. But the American mass media have actually been quite selective with their counts, rarely mentioning Iraqi casualties. Yet it is this growing toll of Iraqi lives that explains why the US is now in a quagmire, caught in a low-intensity conflict that could drag on for years, while claiming more and more lives of US troops. (I'm feeling awkward using the terms "American" and "US" here because, as I've pointed out in several columns, many of the troops deployed there aren't even American citizens. They include immigrants from many countries, including the Philippines.)

The other day my mother asked me why the Iraqis were reacting with such ferocity against the Americans. She is part of an older generation that still remembers when the Americans returned in 1945 to "liberate" Filipinos. While there was joy in Baghdad's streets when Saddam Hussein was overthrown, the Iraqi welcome for the US troops wasn't quite as warm, and over the last few months, hostility to the "liberators" has grown.

Last month an American research group called Project on Defense Alternatives (PDA) released estimates on Iraqi casualties, based on US military statistics, news reports, hospital records and surveys. The report says that between 10,800 and 15,100 Iraqis were killed during the first month of the US invasion alone, almost half of the deaths occurring during the assault on Baghdad. PDA estimates up to 4,300 of the casualties were civilian noncombatants.

I remember receiving an angry e-mail last year from a Filipino-American reacting to one of my anti-war columns. Apparently, he was working for the US defense establishment and he went to great lengths pointing out how precise their weapons were now, and that this would minimize civilian deaths or what the Pentagon calls "collateral damage." So much for that claim.

That initial invasion killed about 20 percent of Saddam's troops—quite a small number because many deserted. About 5,000 hard-core Saddam supporters are now believed to be behind the insurgency against the US troops.

The figure of 5,000, which comes from a senior American official in the Middle East, Gen. John P. Abizaid, may seem small, especially when you look at the number of US troops deployed in Iraq, now averaging about 140,000. But the insurgents have civilian support, and this is the nightmare for the US troops, the possibility of a protracted guerrilla war.

The death toll did not end with the initial invasion. Iraqi Body Count (IBC), another research group composed of Americans and British, has also been using hospital records and surveys to monitor casualties. IBC estimates that between Apr. 14 and Aug. 31 this year, some 1,500 Iraqis, mostly civilians, have died in Baghdad from the continuing armed conflict.

Numbers numb. Imagine the streets of Baghdad right after the US troops' assault, with the dead and injured. We have to try to understand, too, what it means to be occupied by a foreign power. Occasionally, we get a glimpse with footage on CNN or BBC of US troops conducting their night raids—the latest US campaign has been named Operation Iron Hammer—kicking doors open and storming into homes.

During our own martial law I remember how terrified people were in rural areas about possible military raids, which were quite common in areas suspected to harbor rebels. One night in a Kalinga village, I watched as a child went into a temper tantrum, wailing like it was the end of the world and then suddenly falling silent when his mother began to bang on the walls of their huts while chanting, "*Solchacho, solchacho*," the Kalinga way of pronouncing "*soldado*" or soldier.

All that fear was in reaction to fellow Filipinos. Imagine now how American troops look to Baghdad residents. No, it's not quite the same as Liberation in Manila in 1945.

I don't like body counts either, but sometimes it helps to look at the figures, and then to try to remember the people behind the figures: the dead, and the living left behind. It helps, as well, to remember that what's happening in Iraq happened a century earlier in the Philippines, when the United States set out to "liberate" us from Spain. The Philippine-American war dragged on for many years, a simmering low-intensity conflict. It could have happened all over again in Mindanao, if we had allowed US troops to come in last year as combatants.

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More feared missing in sinking

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—More people were believed to have gone missing at sea when a cargo vessel sank near Cuyo, Palawan at the height of tropical storm "Weng" on Friday.

Severo Hablado, designated civil defense coordinator of Sipalay City, Negros Occidental, said 34 passsengers could not be accounted for based on the feedback from the victims' loved ones who went to their office.

He said residents of Sipalay and Cauayan and Hinobaan towns in southern Negros Occidental told him that their loved ones were on board the vessel.

"They told me that they saw them get on the boat before it sailed for Cuyo, Palawan," he said.

"If there are 34 missing, the boat would have had 39 passengers on board and not 24 as claimed by the surviving crew(men)," he said.

Hablado said there was no available passenger manifest for M/L Susan, which left Sipalay, some 180 km south of here, for Palawan at about 10 p.m. on Nov. 13.

The boat sank 14 nautical miles of Cuyo Island around 9 a.m. the following day after huge waves tore a hole in the vessel.

Fishermen rescued five passengers about 20 nautical miles off the coast of Hamtic town on Sunday. They were Arvic Galea, Evelyn Galea, Epifanio Canago, Epifania Canupin and Rodrigo Gepelgon.

Chief Petty Officer Marcial Lindogan, Coast Guard commander of San Jose Antique, said the search continued but huge waves made it difficult.

Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Marañon yesterday ordered the Provincial Disaster Management Team to help in the search. Local governments were also told to monitor the shorelines of southern Negros Occidental for bodies that may have been washed ashore.

In Puerto Princesa City, the Coast Guard remained hopeful they would find more survivors near Cuyo Island.

Lt. Commander Rolando Legazpi, Coast Guard Deputy District Commander, said they were awaiting help from the Western Command.

The Coast Guard conducted aerial search and interviewed residents who possibly saw traces of the boat and survivors.

Legazpi said they will not stop the search until they find the missing passengers.

He said M/L Susan has no regular route because it was a cargo vessel.

It carries only passengers escorting cargo. *Nestor P. Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau and Jofelle P. Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Town hall loses power over P7.8-M debt

MABALACAT, Pampanga—The Pampanga Electric Cooperative (Pelco) central management team cut off electricity at the town hall here to compel local officials to pay P8 million in arrears.

Escorted by 10 heavily armed policemen, engineers from Pelco II enforced the order of ex-communist leader Rodolfo Salas, head of the management team, at 1:30 p.m. despite resistance from Mabalacat Mayor Marino Morales.

Amid a tense crowd, the mayor tried to block Salas who stuck to the team's decision to carry out the final rescue plan for the debt-strapped Pelco I, II and III.

Salas, former chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines and commander of the New People's Army, told Morales that the disconnection came after the team served the third and final notice on Nov. 7.

The municipal government owes the cooperative at least P7.8 million, more than half of which were incurred under Morales since 1995.

The rest of the amount represented at least 18 years of nonpayment by four successive mayors, Salas said.

A furious Morales threatened to close the Pelco II office in the town. He defied the order, instructing his maintenance crew to reconnect the lines to a transformer near the hall.

Salas said the team would sue the mayor for pilferage, a criminal case.

He said it demanded the prompt payment of only P1.6 million of the arrears. Morales only paid P348,000 two weeks ago, saying he was constrained by budget lack.

The management team needs to raise P49 million by Nov. 25 to pay the National Power Corp. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

GMA lets Cotabato City be center of C. Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo has issued a statement that cleared the cloud of doubt on where exactly is the seat of Central Mindanao.

"Cotabato City remains the regional center of Region 12," Mayor Muslimin Sema said quoting the President as saying over a radio interview.

"It clears doubts and uncertainty on where the exact regional seat should be," Sema, who is also the chair of the Regional Development Council, told the INQUIRER.

This means that regional offices of national line agencies would stay in Cotabato City.

Then President Aquino issued Executive Order 429, realigning political subdivisions in Mindanao following the creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

While it did not clearly say the regional seat would be transferred to Koronadal City, political leaders and local government executives interpreted it to be that way.

"EO 429 has been overtaken by events," Sema said.

National government agencies have moved to Koronadal City spending monthly rentals while leaving newly built buildings in Cotabato City. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Masbate folk rally against P340-M loan

LEGAZPI CITY—A group of Masbateños held a rally in front of the provincial capitol in Masbate City yesterday to oppose a proposed P340-million loan of the provincial government from the Land Bank of the Philippines.

Supt. Romeo Mapalo, Masbate police director, said the rally lasted for about two hours.

The protesters, including three board members, held placards and banners expressing their protests against the proposed loan.

Herminio Valdemoro, Masbate provincial administrator, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that the rally was held in time for a session of the provincial board which was postponed due to lack of quorum.

Earlier, Bishop Joel Baylon of Masbate pleaded to Masbate Gov. Antonio Kho not to pursue the plan.

Baylon said he believed that "there are several difficulties in this loan ... which are reasons enough to make said loan open to question."

Three legislators also wrote LBP president Margarito Teves to suspend the loan.

Representatives Emilio Espinosa Jr., Fausto Seachon and Vida Espinosa said "the inopportune time with which the loan is requested is spurious if not doubly suspicious due to the proximity of the ... electoral process." *Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Protests grow over proposed coal-fired plant

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

BANATE, Iloilo—Opposition to a proposed $150 million coal-fired power plant continued to snowball as around 2,000 residents of this coastal town yesterday joined a rally against the controversial project.

Residents from Barangay San Salvador, the proposed site of the project, and from neighboring villages marched to the gymnasium in Banate, about 54 km north of Iloilo City, where a rally was held.

The protesters carried placards and streamers denouncing the project.

The Iglesia Filipinas Independiente and leftist groups led a caravan from Iloilo City and Ajuy town before converging at the Banate multi-purpose gymnasium where the rally was held.

Physician Otilia Peregil, spokesperson of the Banatenhon Against Coal-Fired Plant, said the environmental hazards of the plant will not only affect Banate but also neighboring towns.

"We are not in favor of coal-fired power plants because emissions from these are harmful to the people's health," said Ma. Geobelyn Lopez, spokesperson of the People's Response for the Protection of the Environment.

In a pastoral letter, Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said the environmental hazards far outweigh whatever advantages the project will bring to the communities.

BCDA to award highway contracts next year

THE BASES Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) will award the contracts for the construction of Package 1 and Package 2 of the 94.5-kilometer Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway Project (SCTEP) by March and February next year.

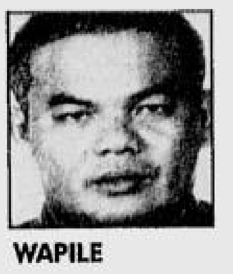
A BCDA news release yesterday said the acquisition for the right of way for the expressway project is almost complete.

In September, the BCDA prequalified three Japanese contractors for Package 2.

SCTEP is part of the "alliance" initiative of the Subic-Clark Alliance for Development (SCAD), where the development of the Subic Bay Freeport, the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport and the expressway will be integrated to make Central Luzon the country's next economic frontier and anchor.

BCDA officials, led by program director Antonio Rex Chan and program manager Rolando Tongco, said bidders should comply with requirements of BCDA's Special Bids and Awards Committee.

Countdown for Justice



WAPILE

IT is exactly 554 days today since Pagadian journalist Edgar Damalerio was slain in cold blood. The principal suspect, police officer Guillermo Wapila, remains at large after escaping while in the custody of the police.

ROUNDUP

Rebs burn equipment

ANGAT, Bulacan—New People's Army rebels owned responsibility for the burning of several quarry equipment owned by a town councilor and his brother in Barangay Binagbag on Friday night. In a statement, the rebels said they wanted to punish quarry operators for destroying the Angat River. Supt. Tomas de Armas, Angat police chief, said the equipment belonged to Councilor Jowar Bautista and his brother. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Outstanding farmer

POLANGUI, Albay—Restituto Basquines of Barangay Gamot, Polangui, who was last year's national awardee for most outstanding farmer during the Gawad Saka Coco-based System awards ceremony in Malacañang on Wednesday, received P500,000 from President Macapagal-Arroyo for the Samahan ng Magkakalamay of Polangui. The financial aid aims to boost and promote sugarcane food products like *kalamay* and *panutsa*, two of Bicol's delicacies.
Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

'Hot' logs seized

BUTUAN CITY—At least 1,200 pieces of illegally cut logs were seized on the riverbank of Barangay Bit-os. Christopher Kuizon, Caraga technical director for Forest Management Services, said the logs were hidden under water lilies and were left behind by fleeing poachers. Kuizon said some of the seized logs were consigned to big wood-based companies in the city. He said the firms violated their permits and might face sanctions for buying illegally cut forest products.
Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Drug dealer nabbed

BUTUAN CITY—Authorities on Wednesday arrested the most notorious drug dealer in Caraga during a raid in Buenavista, Agusan del Norte. Supt. Glenn de la Torre, regional director of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, said Montajib Saditon was responsible for the proliferation of shabu in the region. Confiscated from the suspect were at least 49 sachets of suspected shabu worth more than P100,000, a .45 cal. pistol, ammunition, cell phones and P28,000 in cash. Two persons, including an alleged bodyguard of a Lanao del Norte mayor, were also held for questioning when they were found in Saditon's house.
Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Kidnapper gets life term

LEGAZPI CITY—Regional trial court judge Antonio Alfane on Nov. 7 sentenced to 20 years life imprisonment one of the four suspects who kidnapped two sons of a bank manager on Jan. 31, 2001. Wilfredo Pranes of Manito, Albay was charged with kidnapping and serious illegal detention. His accomplices—former Manito town councilor Rogelio Lopera, Efren Lopera and Aurelio Borras—were killed by members of a Special Weapons and Tactics team from Manila who were sent here after a failed series of negotiations to release kidnap victims Kevin Joshua Burgos, 8, and brother James Stephen, 6. The father of the victims said he was happy with the judgment.
Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

5 nabbed for drugs

BIÑAN, Laguna—Police collared five persons involved in the illegal drug trade in two separate incidents recently. Arrested on Nov. 3 were Ellen S. Santo, 29, Reggie A. Olagur, 25, and Marvin A. Ramos. Two other suspects arrested on Nov. 2 in Barangay Platero were Rolando Sigue, 36, and Avelino Nielo, 42, both residents of the village.
Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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P68.8-M project launched by GMA tagged illegal

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—A former mayor and a contractors' organization of the city asked the court here to declare as illegal the construction of the new P68.8-million city hall because the contract to build it lacked the approval of President Macapagal-Arroyo who inaugurated the building last week.

Dan Lim, who served as acting mayor in 1986, and engineer Petronilo Sarigumba, representing the Bohol Builders and Contractors Associations, filed a petition against Mayor Jose Torralba, Vice Mayor Jorge Cabalit and city treasurer Visitacion Acero.

The petitioners said the cost and construction work of the new city hall was purposely split into two by the city government to bypass the required approval by the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) and Ms Macapagal of government projects worth P50 million and above.

They asked the court to stop the city council from ratifying the build-transfer agreement (BTA) between the city government and Young Builders Corp. and to prevent the ratification of the terms and conditions of the P17-million loan of the city with the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP).

Torralba, however, dismissed the case as moot and academic, saying the city council already ratified the BTA and the loan agreement in a session on Nov. 12, the same day the petition was filed.

The mayor denied allegations that the contract price was intentionally split, saying the petition was "clearly politically motivated."

Lim and Sarigumba said Torralba entered into a contract with Young Builders Corp. in September 2002 for the construction of the new city hall at a project cost of P49,923,907.64.

Two months after the BTA contract was executed, it was found that there was a need for additional work "not included in the program of work in the original contract" with the contractor submitting a program of work worth P18,684,195.41.

Among the additional works were floor and wall finishes, electrical works for air-con units, fire alarm, grounding system, power sources, mechanical works for elevators and plumbing and sanitary works.

Lim and Sarigumba said "even a mere perusal by an ordinary layman" on the additional works "convincingly show" that these are basic for the construction and completion of the proposed government center and "could not have been unforeseen."

They said the additional and extra works did not conform to guidelines, rules and regulations governing local government unit-funded infrastructure projects and conditions.

"(I)t is clear ... that even before the start of the construction project, these allegedly necessary additional works were already identified ... and should have been already included in the original contract," the petitioners said.

WINNING HEARTS

AFP

A US Marine medic examines an elderly Muslim woman during a medical mission with Philippine soldiers in Talungkasay, Zamboanga. The medical missions were part of military exercises held in Zamboanga to train Philippine troops on ways to fight terrorism.

Batangas provincial board suspends mayor who stopped village road plan

BATANGAS CITY—Three months after stopping the construction of a barangay road, a town mayor was put on preventive suspension by the Batangas provincial board after board members approved a resolution that would strip him of his powers for two months.

Suspended was Balete town Mayor David Pamplona, a second term mayor with a trail of charges including threats, intimidation and grave coercion.

Board member Don Linatoc, chair of the good government committee, said in the resolution he filed that the move stemmed from a complaint filed by Wilson Maralit, chief of Barangay Malabanan, Balete, alleging that Pamplona abused his position as mayor by obstructing and stopping the road construction in the barangay.

In Maralit's complaint, he said the mayor threatened, intimidated and coerced the workers of the road project to stop the construction.

"We have found prima facie (evidence) to support the suspension," Linatoc said. "When our committee questioned Pamplona, he admitted to have ordered the stoppage of the project."

Linatoc said by stopping the road project, Pamplona has deprived the people of Malabanan access to government infrastructure that should have been provided to them earlier.

He said the road project was not funded by the barangay or the municipality, but by the provincial government and was implemented by the provincial engineer's office.

"By stopping the road construction, Pamplona violated the implementing rules and regulations of RA 7160," Linatoc said.

The Sangguniang Panlalawigan unanimously approved the resolution. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Farmers disown move to stop rice import program

RICE farmers yesterday appealed to Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo and National Food Authority (NFA) administrator Arthur Yap to heed their plea for an extension of two programs that allow farmers to import and distribute rice.

In a statement, the farmers' groups—National Confederation of Irrigators Association, Hukbalahap Veterans, Regional Farmers Action Council and Philippine Farmers Advisory Board—also disowned Raul Montemayor, the farmers' representative who sits in the NFA Council.

They told Lorenzo and Yap that Montemayor does not speak for all rice farmers in the country when he recommended that the two programs of President Macapagal-Arroyo—Farmers as Importers Program and Farmers as Distributor's Program—be scrapped.

The farmers expressed support to Yap for helping implement the two programs successfully from April to August.

But they asked Montemayor to stop lobbying for the programs' end, accusing him of misrepresenting farmers' groups.

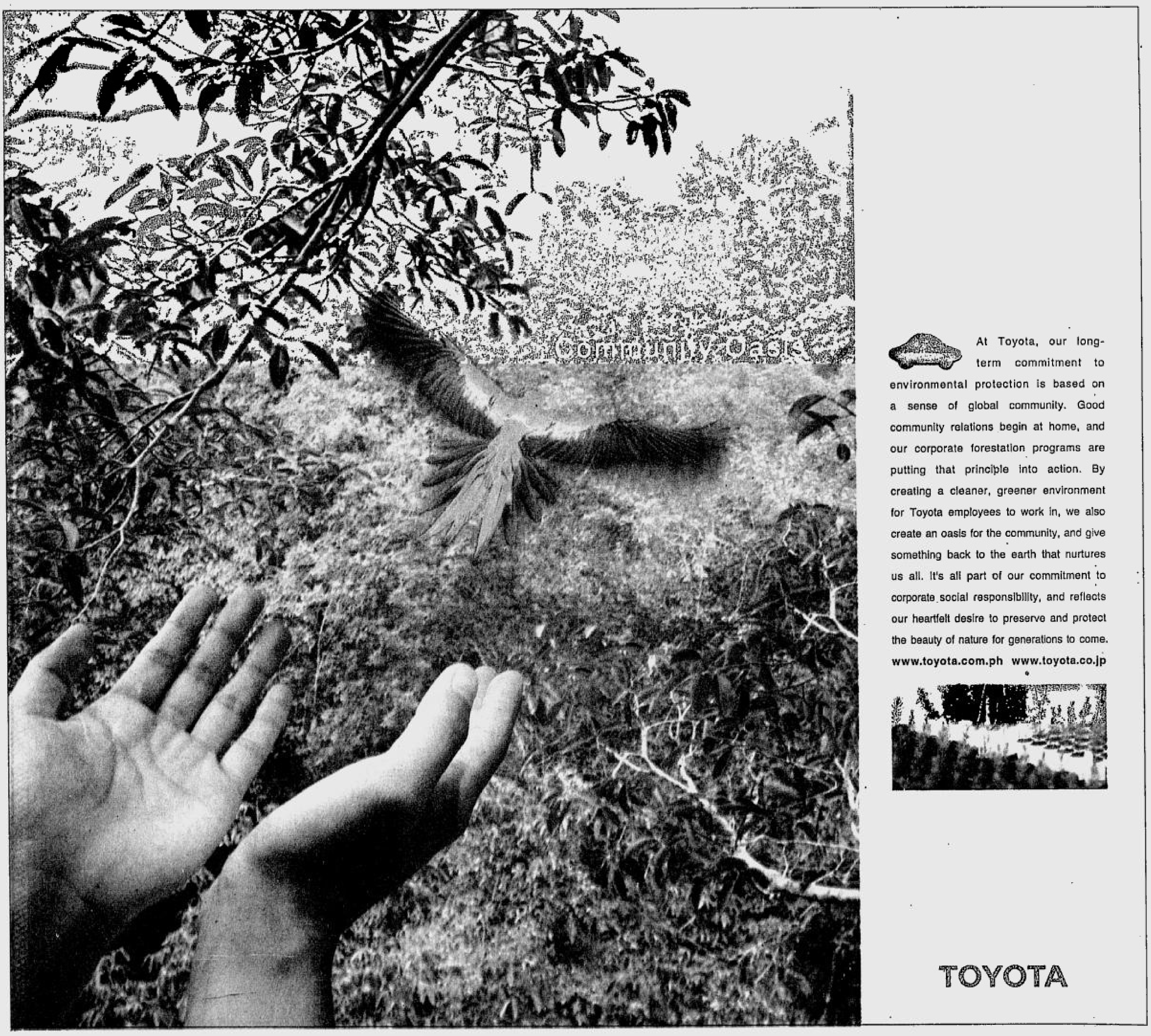
Montemayor claimed that only 72 percent of farmers' cooperatives nationwide benefited from the programs.

The farmers' groups said Montemayor wants to scrap the programs after failing to include as beneficiaries 25 farmers' cooperatives identified with him. They asked Ms Macapagal to step in to address their concerns.

The farmers made the appeal as the NFA set up buying stations to protect farmers from unscrupulous traders this harvest season.

Luduvico J. Jarino, NFA Central Visayas director, said the NFA will buy palay at P9 a kilogram and corn at P6 per kg.

The NFA has set up buying stations in Canlaon City, Bayawan City and Mabinay, Negros Oriental. *With a report from Romy G. Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*



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TOYOTA

Underpaid teachers pray for pension

By Tarra Quismundo

WHEN Mauricia Sison celebrated her 65th birthday last September, she also retired from a job to which she has devoted her entire life.

Sison taught countless students at Isabelo delos Reyes Elementary School in Tondo, Manila for 43 years. When she left the campus on her birthday, almost P19,000 was deducted from her P65,168 premium benefits from the Government Service Insurance System.

"Their reason for deducting that amount was that there were no remittances in 1997 and 1998, while the deduction from my salary was automatic every month," said Sison, who started teaching in 1963.

When she began teaching, she was paid P284 a month. When she left, having taught in all levels and practically every subject, she had a gross salary of P12,000.

Sison, whose three kids are all professionals and have their own families, lives alone in a house she and her husband had built in Bacoor, Cavite. Her husband passed away last year.

"That money is important to me, especially now that my children have their own families," said Sison.

Teachers like her—480,000 nationwide—have lodged complaints against GSIS over delays in loans and pensions.

The pension fund automatically deducts 12 percent from a teacher's basic salary, which averages P9,939. That meager amount is subject to other deductions, according to Benjamin Valbuena, Manila Public School Teacher's Association (MPSTA) president.

The GSIS, in previous reports, had explained that the delays in the release of pensions were caused by the automation of their system, and the failure of other government agencies to remit monthly deductions to the pension fund.

This, according to Valbuena, includes the Department of Education, the central agency which processes their payroll and forwards premium deductions to the GSIS.

And the delays in the DepEd's remittances to the GSIS is the reason why almost P19,000 was taken from Sison's premium benefits, Valbuena said.

"How are we supposed to remedy this problem," asked MPSTA vice president Wilma Nobleza. "The problem does not come from us, and we're the ones who suffer—even made to pay for it."

Nobleza also said the problems of school teachers go beyond the delays in loan and pension releases.

Nobleza showed a GSIS document which reflects the breakdown of a loan to Petronila Campos, a teacher of Dr. A. Albert Elementary School in Sampaloc, Manila.

"She was granted a salary loan of P95,360," Nobleza said. "But she only got a net of P274.70."

Of her loan, P82,879 was deducted as "previous balances" which, Nobleza said, had no breakdown.

She said Campos was not aware of the "previous balances," claiming she had paid all her previous loans, and has no standing credit with GSIS.

Now, Campos is being charged almost P2,300 a month to pay for the loan over a five-year period, Nobleza said.

The MPSTA, in groups of around 200 teachers, will hold a prayer vigil on Earnshaw Street, España Boulevard, and Plaza Salamanca in Manila at 6 p.m. today to call for an end to the alleged corruption at the GSIS.

Valbuena said that the vigil is part of a series of mass actions that will culminate in Mendiola on Nov. 20, when the MPSTA and other groups will take their fight to the streets.

"(Government officials) must remember that an unhappy teacher produces an unhappy student," said Nobleza.

METROBRIEFS

Girl raped, strangled

POLICE are now hunting down the man who raped and strangled to death an 8-year-old girl in Quezon City yesterday. The body of Richelle Amorceo, a grade one student and resident of Pechayan-Kanan, North Fairview, was found on a sidewalk, a few meters away from her house at around 3 a.m., police said. Police said the victim was alone in the house because her mother, Florencita, went to the market to sell vegetables. Chief Supt. Napoleon Castro said that they have already invited three men for questioning. He refused to reveal their names. *Tina Santos*

Runaway driver

THE KOREAN owner of a garments factory in Taytay, Rizal lost P1.075 million to two men on a motorcycle over the weekend. Nam Joo Bae, 53, of Valle Verde II, Pasig City told the police that his driver, Bobby Santiago, might have a hand in the robbery. Police said Bae was on his way to the Seijin Apparel Corp., in Baltao Compound, Taytay, when the robbers struck at around 8 a.m. Bae said only two other people knew about the money—his secretary and Santiago. Police said they had gone to Santiago's house in Barangay Muzon and learned that he had left for Romblon with his father. *Luige del Puerto*

Mystery SUV

AN ABANDONED vehicle with bloodstained seats has left lawmen wondering whether it was used in a shooting or a kidnapping. Central Police District Director Chief Supt. Napoleon Castro, said his men had received reports that a woman, allegedly the owner of the Toyota RAV 4, had been kidnapped. Castro said that at about 9:30 a.m., residents of Cuenca and Dapitan Streets, Quezon City yesterday saw the sport utility vehicle being parked in the area. Witnesses told police that three men got down the SUV carrying the body of an unconscious woman. The men transferred to a waiting Toyota van. *Tina Santos*

Singing ambassadors

THE ALPHA Phi Beta Chancery will sponsor a Concerto of Brotherhood and Patriotism featuring the famous "UP Singing Ambassadors" on Nov. 20, Thursday, 6:30 p.m. at RCBC Plaza Romulo Auditorium, Makati City. The Chancery is composed of alumni members of the Alpha Phi Beta Fraternity of the University of the Philippines.

Pity those Ayala protesters

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

PITY those people from Tondo's slums who were clubbed, tear-gassed and hosed by anti-riot policemen during the rally in Ayala Wednesday. Many of them were women and children.

They were allegedly paid a measly P300 each, P150 in downpayment and the other half after the rally. Rally organizers took advantage of their poverty.

Those poor people didn't know the issues for which they were supposed to be holding the protest rally.

* * *

Probably the only hard-core protester in that raucous rally was Herman Tiu Laurel, a pseudo-journalist. He is also poverty-stricken but not in the financial sense. He's KSP. *Kulang sa pansin.*

Who is Laurel? He is an Erap apologist. He's a constant participant in pro-Erap rallies.

So, now you have an idea of the people behind Wednesday's riot in Ayala.

* * *

The country's tallest Christmas tree is aglitter again at the Araneta Center in Cubao, Quezon City, according to a front-page article yesterday in this newspaper.

But the well-written article by reporter Volt Contreras bemoans the closure of COD department store that, for generations, featured motorized puppets on the store's facade every Christmas. The yuletide automatons attracted thousands of spectators.

Like Supt. Benigno Durana, I also miss the COD department store's motorized puppets.

* * *

Not only do I miss the COD show, I also miss the glory that was once the Araneta Center.

The Araneta Coliseum was—and still is—the center of the Araneta Center complex. I saw the construction and opening of the Dome when I was a kid. My family used to live in one of the streets near Araneta Center.

But just like Escolta in Manila, the Araneta Center has to give way to the new shopping areas in Makati and Ortigas.

Araneta Center, just like Escolta, has been overtaken by progress.

* * *

It's a good thing there's Mayor Lito Atienza who's making Manila come to life again.

The mayor is making up for the loss of Escolta as the country's business district. He's turned Ermita and Malate into a haven for young people during weekends. He's built parks and promenades that are teeming with people at night.

One such promenade is the so-called Baywalk along Roxas Boulevard. Here, hundreds of people stroll nightly along the once crime-infested seawall. The more than one-kilometer stretch from the US Embassy to the Manila Yacht Club has been turned into a lively park.

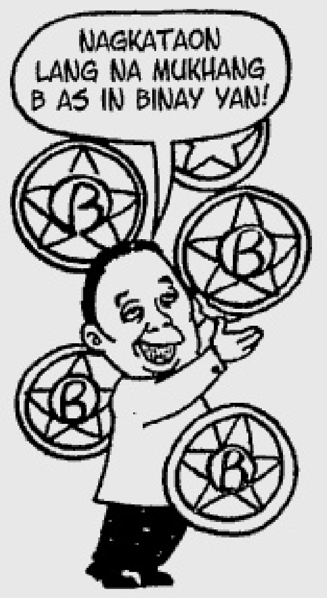
* * *

Side by side with the restoration of glory in Ermita and Malate is the cleaning up of the tourist district of hoodlums and beggars.

The promenades and parks and the entertainment districts of Malate and Ermita will not be visited by thousands of people if peace and order is not maintained in those places, Atienza told me.

If promenaders and bar-hoppers fall victim to street criminals, the mayor said, those places will again become "ghost towns" because bad news spreads around fast.

Let's hope Atienza is able to maintain the peace in Manila's fun places.


NAGKATAON LANG NA MUKHANG B AS IN BINAY YAN!
B

It doesn't stand for Binay

'B' IS for Paglingkuran ang Bayan, not for Binay.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay yesterday said that the conspicuous letter B seen as part of glitzy Christmas decorations hanging in the city's main thoroughfares is not a personal emblem but a symbol of Makati.

Concerned that the symbol would be misconstrued as politicking or early campaigning for the 2004 elections, Binay said he has ordered many of the decorations to be taken down.

"I think it was overzealousness on the part of the supplier," Binay said.

Binay also clarified that the symbol is actually a combination of the letters P and B for Paglingkuran ang Bayan, which has been the city government's motto since 1986.

"We did not mean for the decorations to become so numerous and scandalous," Binay said in Filipino.

When asked about his plans in the 2004 elections, Binay replied: "I plan to run as president… of the republic of Makati." *Margaux Ortiz*

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UP disowns Malabon water study

By Edson Tandoc Jr. and Tina Santos

IT WAS never a University of the Philippines study.

Thus said the head of the UP National Sciences Research Institute (NSRI) yesterday, referring to supposed research work publicized by the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) that showed water supply in Barangay Longos, Malabon City, as unsafe.

UP-NSRI head Maria Ausilia Siringan told the INQUIRER yesterday that the FDC only asked them to do a routine analysis on a water sample which the group had collected.

Apart from that, she stressed, the UP-NSRI had no other participation in the purported study.

This developed as Rafael Alunan III, Maynilad Water Services Inc. president, hit the FDC for misleading the public regarding the true situation in Malabon and blaming the water firm for it.

"The alleged UP study of fecal matter in Malabon's water supply is a case of gross misrepresentation by the FDC," Alunan said in a letter sent to the INQUIRER.

He added that the FDC "misread the data and forced its conclusions to fit its adversarial stance against Maynilad."

Alunan hit back at the nongovernment organization for "(ignoring) the basic precepts of truth, justice and civility in their public (pronouncements) to suit their biases and paymasters."

Meanwhile, Malabon health officials maintained that their own tests showed that water supply in Longos was safe.

This supported assertions by Maynilad that the water it was distributing was safe for drinking.

Maynilad stressed that recent contamination was mainly due to booster pumps and illegal water connections.

Alunan, however, added that contamination could also be traced to filthy surroundings due to poor sanitation by the residents. Such factors, he said, were beyond the water concessionaire's control.

"Maynilad's water is safe until it is subjected to abuse and neglect by parties and conditions beyond its control," Alunan said, adding that it would never sabotage itself.

SAPATERO FESTIVAL
MARIKINA

RISE AND SHINE
A participant in Marikina City's Sapatero Festival applies the final touches to his barangay's entry to the fluvial parade that started Sunday along the Marikina River. The festival is to celebrate the pride of the Shoe City.
JOAN BONDOC

WPD warns car owners of modus operandi

MOTORISTS beware: Don't talk to strangers or risk losing your cars.

The Western Police District aired this warning yesterday following the discovery of a new modus operandi used by robbers operating in Metro Manila.

According to WPD spokesperson Chief Insp. Gerry Agunod, they had received information that robbers, usually riding tandem on a motorcycle, victimize drivers by initially pretending to ask for directions or for help.

The robbers also usually operate at night, he added.

Agunod said one of the robbers would knock on the vehicle's window while it is stopped and ask the passengers for directions.

While the window is rolled down, the suspects would then pull out their firearms and announce the heist.

Sometimes, apart from taking a victim's belongings, the suspects would also drive away with his vehicle.

A variation to this modus operandi is that the suspect would knock on the vehicle's window and tell the driver that he has a flat tire.

When the driver goes down the vehicle to check, the robbers would pounce on him.

Most of the robbers using this technique are generally not suspicious-looking and are dressed respectably, sometimes in neckties, jackets and eyeglasses. The suspects also ride nice-looking motorcycles. *Leila B. Salaverria*

MMDA giving former drug dependents a new high

By Margaux Ortiz

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said it had opened its doors to former drug dependents wanting to start life anew as traffic enforcers.

In a press conference yesterday, MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said people who are qualified and who want to change for the better should not be deprived of the chance to serve the country as traffic enforcers.

"All they (former drug dependents) have to prove is that they are free from drug dependency and show resolve not to return to their former addiction," Fernando said.

As a requirement, the MMDA chair said the applicant must be certified by an accredited center that he had undergone rehabilitation.

He added that officials of the drug rehabilitation center should be able to show that the former drug dependent had the potential to become "more disciplined than the rest of the citizenry."

Fernando, however, emphasized that applicants should be college graduates, 5'6" tall, and with a pleasing personality.

The MMDA chair explained that the new personnel were needed to replace those who have retired, resigned or been ordered dismissed as a result of the MMDA policy to instill discipline among its rank and file.

Fernando said the agency was continuously hiring personnel to keep the agency's operations going.

As for fears that the former drug dependents might go back to substance abuse, Fernando said they had been monitoring their men through random drug tests and checkups to make sure that these are staying away from illegal substances.

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SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Mangulat

BASKETBALL: NBA-Blazers vs Mavericks; 9:30 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports—It's a western showdown between Portland and Dallas.
NBA Greatest Games-Mavericks vs Jazz, Game 5 2001 Western First Round; 12 noon; Solar Sports—Dallas outscores Utah, 27-12, to come back and close out the series.
Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

SUDDEN-DEATH PLAYOFF

Delasin tops LPGA tilt in Alabama

By Jong Arcano

A DAY after Manny Pacquiao stunned the boxing world by battering Marco Barrera into submission, another true-blooded Pinoy scored a big victory in America yesterday as Dorothy Delasin edged Korea's Hee Won Han in a sudden-death playoff to win the LPGA Tournament of Champions in Mobile, Alabama.

Delasin, the 2000 LPGA Rookie of the Year, banged in an eight-foot birdie putt on the first extra hole for the win, her first since topping the Samsung World Championship in 2001. Earlier, Han's birdie attempt stopped a roll short of the cup.

Delasin, whose parents are Filipinos living in Daly City in San Francisco, closed with a 69 as she survived the blistering charge of Han, who fired a back-nine 32 en route to a 68.

Both ladies ended up tied at 8-under-par 280 in regulation play at the Magnolia Grove Crossings course.

What has been a mediocre season ended in a flourish for the 23-year-old two-time Philippine Sportswriters Association Athlete of the Year awardee as she gained a ticket to next week's season-ending ADT Tour Championship.

It was Delasin's fourth career win counting the Giant Eagle Classic she won back-to-back in 2001-02 and the Samsung tourney.

President Macapagal-Arroyo congratulated Delasin for the victory, noting the Filipinos seem to be on a winning streak.

"Our athletes and sportsmen are on a roll and have proven to be world class. We salute them and wish them more power," the President said.

With her $122,000 payoff, Delasin zoomed to No. 22 in earnings with $476,170, bumping No. 30 Suzanne Pettersen. Also affected was No. 31 Jenny Rosales who may have totally lost her chance to play in Florida.

Rosales was already ranked 26th going into the last four events of the LPGA Tour. But she opted to skip all of them, including the Asian swing which paved the way for her downfall.

Until Delasin hit the jackpot again yesterday, Rosales' only hope of making it was for the pregnant Patricia Meunier-Lebouc to withdraw.

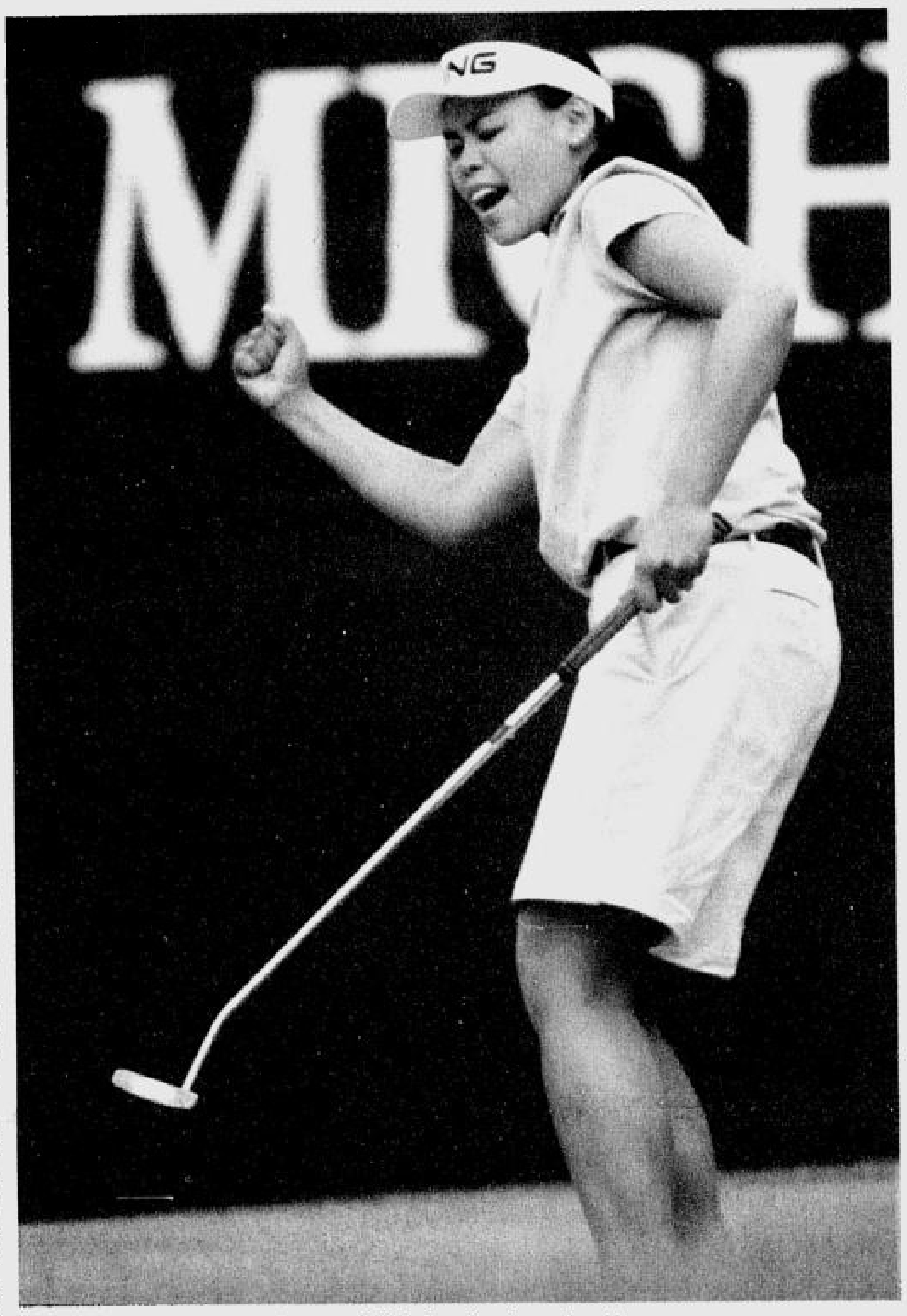
Delasin also qualified to play in the Tournament of Champions for two more years with the win.

"It's been a tough year and a half for me, so to come out strong it means so much to me," said a tearful Delasin.

"Last year, I hurt my wrist and so my season didn't really start until the middle. So, I had to catch up with everybody. This year I've been playing well, and have not put too much pressure on myself to play good. I'm still growing as a person and a woman, and I'm still young. This is just a great big step for me."

The new twist in Delasin's young career might also pave the way for a long-awaited reunion with her family, particularly with her father Sonny.

Dorothy has not been on speaking terms with the elder Delasin ever since she took in Mark Freeland as her manager and Clint Begay as her caddie two years ago. It was on the same year that Dorothy re-located to Albuquerque, New Mexico. *With wire reports*



DELASIN pumps her fist as her putt falls in for the win against Han. REUTERS

The final scores:

280—D. Delasin 72-71-68-69 (won via playoff) $122,000, H. Han 72-71-69-68 $75,500
281—L. Davies 75-71-70-65 $54,250
282—G. Park 75-72-67-68, R. Teske 76-70-67-69, MH Kim 76-68-69-69, $35,485
283—R. Jones 75-70-71-67, K. Webb 71-75-67-70, $24,530
284—L. Kane 70-74-72-68, $21,205
286—B. Daniel 75-70-73-68 $19,305

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NOVEMBER 18 · TUESDAY 438-3942

Kin asked taekwondo ass'n to keep jin's death a secret

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE Taekwondo Association kept under wraps the death of a Filipino player who expired while competing in Korea last month upon the request of the victim's family.

PTA executive vice president Hong Sung Chon yesterday said Cromwell Hernandez, 27, was knocked unconscious, slipped into a coma and eventually died with his family at his bedside.

"There's no reason for us to keep it a secret but the family asked us not to make it public, what can we do?" said Hong.

Hernandez was one of the local blackbelts who joined the Hwa Rang competitions, an open tournament which the PTA deemed as a good exposure for players aspiring to become national jins.

Hong said Hernandez turned out to be suffering from brain aneurysm even before he competed. He didn't inform PTA of his health condition and officials only found out about it after he underwent CT scan in the hospital while still in coma.

The tournament, added Hong, didn't feature the SEAG-bound national players, who are currently having their own tune-up tournaments elsewhere.

The jins went to Korea on their own, explained Hong, who added he had already informed PSC commissioner Butch Ramirez about the matter.

The victim's family, according to Hong, came to Korea and took care of all arrangements, including the donation of organs and the eventual cremation of Hernandez.

Hong expressed grief over the player's death even as he promised to extend financial assistance to the family.

Bill limiting PBA Fil-Ams filed

By Cynthia Balana

A BILL seeking to limit the number of Fil-Ams to two per team in the Philippine Basketball Association has been filed by Batangas Rep. Eileen Ermita-Buhain.

The Lakas solon said the proliferation of Fil-Ams in the PBA has resulted in the demoralization of local players, who were being paid less than the Fil-Ams although they are all skilled players.

"Our local players are getting low salaries while their Fil-Am teammates are being paid huge amounts," Ermita-Buhain said.

The wife of Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain said hiring Fil-Ams has also affected the chances of local talents to join the PBA.

She admitted though that the presence of the Fil-Ams or Filipino-Foreigners has raised the level of excitement in the league.

The bill defines Fil-Am or Fil-Foreigner as any professional basketball player whose father or mother is not a natural-born Filipino citizen and who has not played for an aggregate of at least four years in any amateur basketball league in the country.

Tams forge duel with Knights

FAR Eastern U sustained its strong start to down Las Piñas College, 69-61, yesterday in the Champions' League Sweet 16 at the FEU gym.

Getting a big boost from the home crowd, the Tamaraws raced to an early 10-1 lead but the Huskies cut the gap to 21-17.

Then the vaunted FEU defense limited the LPC to only seven points in the second period while RJ Rizada and Rhagnee Sinco combined for 10 in the same stretch to give their team a 38-24 lead at the turn.

With the win, FEU, the reigning UAAP champion, set up a round-of-eight meeting with NCAA titlist Letran.

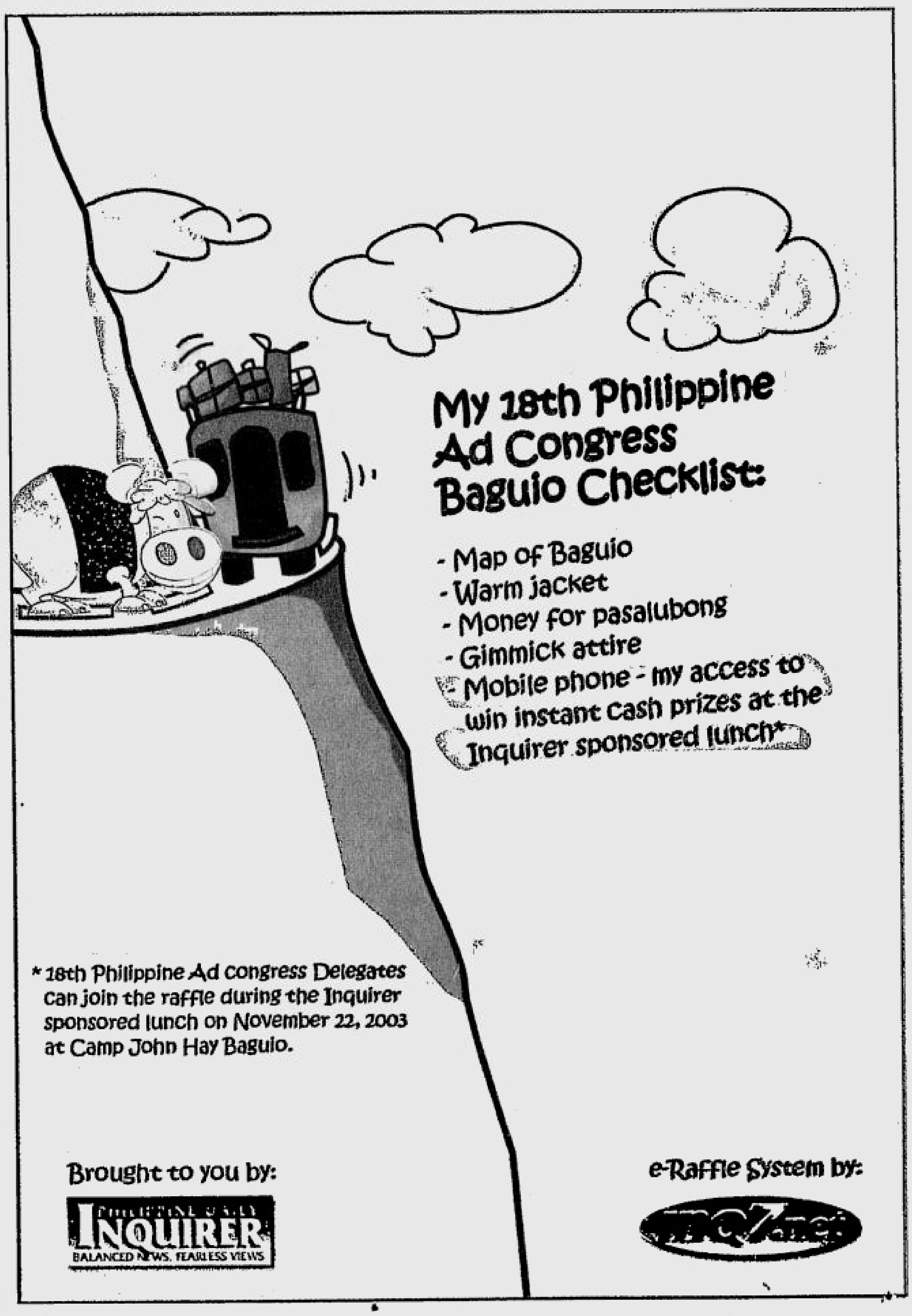
"We played complacent ball. *Gusto yata ng mga bata na maging* perfect host," said FEU coach Koy Banal.

Scores:

FEU 69—Miranda 15, Rizada 15, Santos 10, Sinco 8, Razon 7, Isip 6, Yabut 5, Chan 2, Barcellano 1, Gadiano 0, Gutierrez 0, Sierra 0.

LPC 61—Daa 27, Mordeno 7, Gragasin 7, Nalion 6, Constantino 6, Espera 3, Amistoso 2, Pellejera 2.

Quarters: 21-17, 38-24, 53-48, 69-61.



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No Pacquiao-Barrera rematch, says Hoya

By Salven L. Lagumbay
Contributor

A MANNY Pacquiao-Marco Antonio Barrera rematch is not a done deal.

This is because there was no clause for a rematch in the contract signed by Pacquiao and Barrera for their 12-round clash last Sunday, according to Oscar De La Hoya, known as boxing's Golden Boy, during a post-fight press conference.

De La Hoya, who owns Golden Boy Enterprises which promotes Barrera's fights, accompanied the Mexican boxer in the conference held minutes after Pacquiao stopped the world's best featherweight in the 11th round of their 12-round non-title clash at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

Rod Nazario, Pacquiao's business manager, had earlier announced that there was a clause for a rematch if the Filipino wins and none if Barrera prevails. For the rematch, Pacquiao will earn $750,000, more than half of his purse for Sunday's encounter.

Barrera made no mention of a rematch with Pacquiao at the post-fight press conference, but insisted that he would continue his career after taking time off to rest and spend time with his family.

Pacquiao's American agent Murad Muhammad said they're willing to give Barrera a rematch but that would depend on the Mexican, who suffered his worst beating in 61 fights so far.

But before a rematch can happen, Muhammad said Pacquiao may opt to defend his IBF superbantamweight title against Venezuelan star Jose Luis Valbuena, a 32-year-old southpaw with a 24-2-1, 14 KO's record.

Other names being floated as Pacquiao's possible foes include WBA/IBF featherweight king Juan Manuel "Dinamita" Marquez, WBC superbantam champ Oscar Larios and "People's Superbantam Champ" Paulie Ayala.

With his emphatic win last Sunday, Pacquiao also scored a major victory for Philippine boxing.

Although no world title was at stake, Pacquiao's win caused nationwide jubilation and raised the morale of Filipinos here and abroad.

Closer to home, Pacquiao provided Sen. Aquilino Pimentel with a solid reason why Filipinos love the sport and its heroes. Pimentel had earlier announced he would initiate moves to ban the sport of boxing following the death of fighter Freddie Gimay in Mindanao recently.

The Lower House also approved yesterday Resolution No. 1385 giving Pacquiao the Congressional Medal of Honor "for his world class achievement."

In a related development, Pacquiao barged into the elite pound-for-pound list in the latest rankings done by the prestigious boxing website Maxboxing.com.

The website's editor-in-chief, Douglass Fischer, yesterday released the list where Pacquiao was ranked as the No. 9 best pound-for-pound fighter.

PACQUIAO lands a big right on Barrera's face during their non-title bout Sunday. AP

Hero's welcome awaits Manny

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A hero's welcome awaits International Boxing Federation (IBF) super bantamweight champ Manny Pacquiao in his hometown.

"This is going to be a grand celebration," Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. told reporters yesterday.

The city government is preparing a big welcome dinner for Pacquiao, who outclassed world featherweight boxing champ Marco Antonio of Mexico during a 12-round non-title bout on Sunday in San Antonio, Texas.

Cable subscribers in the city center were glued to their television sets, watching as the Pinoy champ humbled the much-acclaimed Mexican prizefighter. Rural villagers tuned in to dxES Bombo Radyo, which broadcast a blow-by-blow coverage.

"He's greater than (Gabriel "Flash") Elorde," said Councilor Eduardo Leyson III. "He deserves this hero's welcome."

Pacquiao is expected back in Manila on Friday. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Ubix-Riviera golf on today at Langer

By Jong Arcano

THE SEEDED professionals warm up for the big money chase in today's side-event of the Ubix-Riviera National Pro-Am at the Langer course of the Riviera Golf and Country Club in Silang, Cavite.

Invited VIPs and guests of the sponsoring firm will get the feel of the tournament's exciting alternate-shot format in the 18-hole event serving as a prelude to the P1.2 million tournament proper kicking off tomorrow.

The field will be teeing off shotgun style at 9 a.m. The awards ceremony will follow at the Riviera Main Clubhouse Grill Room.

Still, cash prizes are on offer for the top three finishers with P30,000 going to the winning pro, P20,000 for the runner-up and P10,000 for the third finisher. Their amateur partners will get a merchandise.

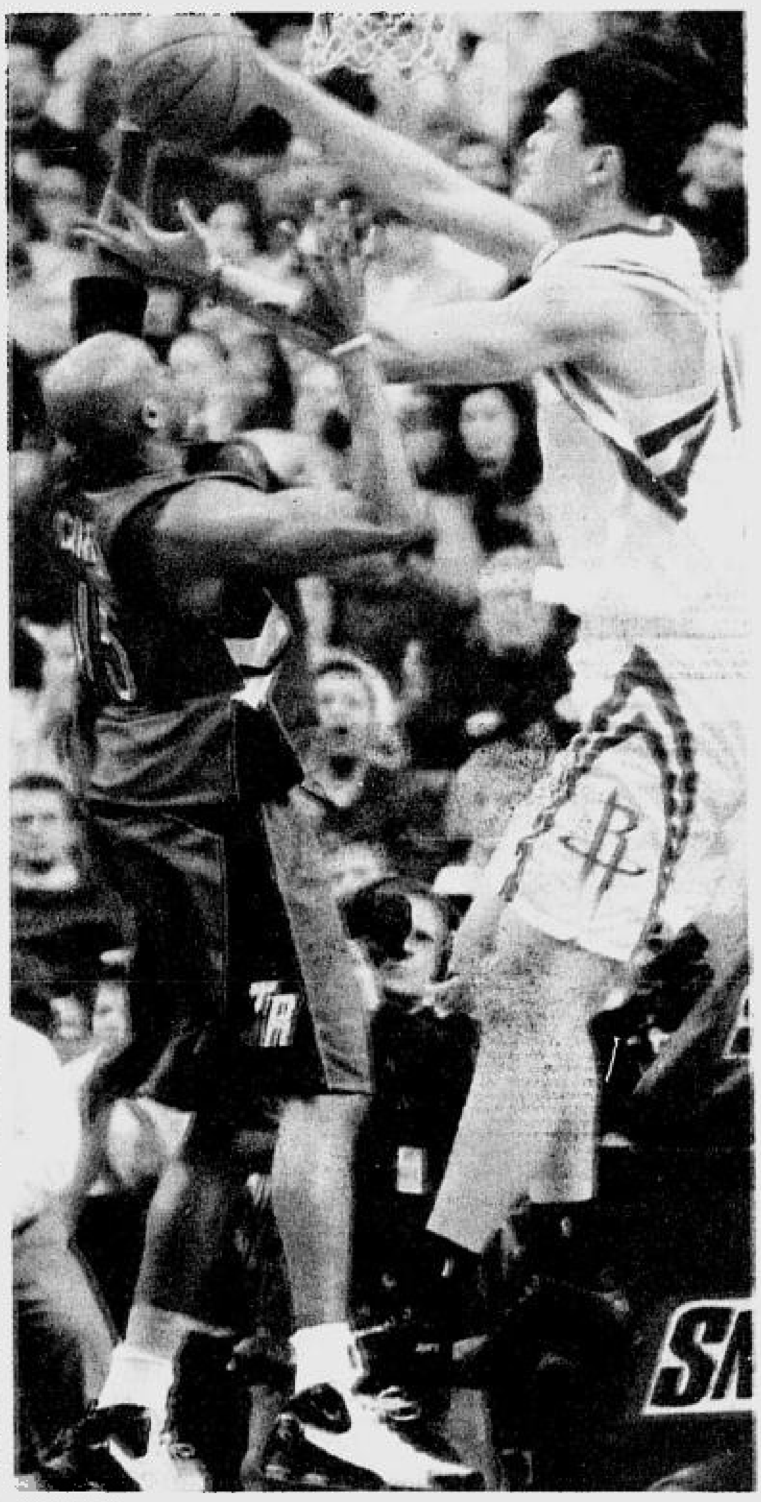
Topping the list of prizes is a brand new car from Toyota Motors for the player who scores an ace on the fourth hole of the Langer course.

Aside from U-Bix Corp. and Riviera, the other backers are U-Bix Konica Digital Copiers, Epson Printers, U-Bix Riso Digital Duplicators, S Yard-Golf, Pivo Praha, Grappa's Cafe Appassionato, Petron, Nike Golf (Pacsports), DHL World Express-WWW Express, Airlift Asia, ESAPSA, Pagcor, Philippine National Oil Corp. and Toyota.

Ceremonial tee-offs will be made at 8:15 a.m. by Bert Bravo, chair and chief executive officer of U-Bix Corp., National Golf Association of the Philippines president Rod Feliciano, Riviera chair Cesar Jaymer and Riviera president Commodore Danny Pizarro.

VIPs of the title sponsor and other backers are also expected to grace the awards rites including U-Bix president and chief operating officer Vida Ty and Konica Minolta representatives Ms. Kahori Hisano, Tadayoshi Yamada and Toshiyuki Yamada.

No less than 120 teams led by defending champion Raul and his brother Paul Miñoza will be vying for honors in the pro-am which is actually a revival of the event used to be known as the Fort Bonifacio Pro-Am.



FOILED

Houston Rockets' Yao Ming, (right) foils a shot by Toronto Raptors' Vince Carter during their NBA game Sunday night. Chris Bosh forced overtime with his first career 3-pointer and scored 10 of his season-high 25 points in the extra periods to lead the Raptors to a 101-97 double-overtime victory. Other results: Sacramento 106, Golden State 104 and LA Lakers 99, Miami 77. AP, REUTERS

Malaysia rules Legend Tee

JW Malaysia 1 captured the team championship in the recent third Legend Tee golf tournament at the Subic Bay Golf and Country Club at the Subic Bay Freeport.

The event was staged by the Legend International Resorts Ltd. (LIRL) which raised more than P275,000 for the Tabang Mindanaw project.

Chown Wee-kong emerged the low gross champion while Chris Otis copped the lowest net honors to win round-trip tickets to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Other winners were Oh Jungyun (class A), WY Tsui (class B) and M. Furichi (class C). Sponsors were Cebu Pacific, Borneo Tours, Dynamic Sports Inc., Global Air 21, GTS Insurance, the Indonesian Embassy, Metroplex Berhad, Premiere Wines & Spirits, Standard Insurance, Subic Bay Yacht Club, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-Lite, Trading Gateways Inc., SBMA, Legenda Hotel, Universal Motors Corp. and Kalakbayan Travel.

SPORTSWATCH

Toyota returning next year

TOYOTA, a PBA pioneer, will return to the basketball scene as it joins the PBL wars next year. "Yes, Toyota's back," Toyota executive Virgilio Angeles confirmed yesterday. Angeles said NCAA champion Letran will comprise Toyota's lineup in next year's PBL Conference. Letran coach Louie Alas will also handle the squad. Angeles stressed that the franchise will be known as Toyota-Otis, which is owned by respected businessman Reginaldo A. Oben. Oben, who also owns Toyota-North and Balintawak, will lead the formal signing of Toyota-Otis' PBL entry today. PBL chair Dioceldo Sy, Commissioner Chino Trinidad, Angeles and PBL board member Jesse Chua will also participate in the contract signing. Toyota-Otis brought the Nutri-licious franchise owned by Chua. *Dennis U. Eroa*

LGBA 7-stag tilt final leg today

THE FOURTH and final leg of "LGBA 7-Stag Derby" gets going today at the Roligon Mega Cockpit. A total of 55 fights are lined up in the elimination round. The LGBA Breeder of the Year 2003 winner will be known after the finals on Thursday. Past winners in the LGBA derbies were entries Anito of Mauro Prieto (first leg), Banahaw I of Benjie Lim and Justice Magdangal Elma (second leg) and San Pablo Heat of Blandy Tolentino (third leg). Tolentino is the current leader in the LGBA Breeder of the Year with 18 points, followed by Prieto with 16.5 points. Meanwhile, registration is still ongoing in connection with promoter Rolly Ligon's "Apordabol Na, Incredibol Pa 5-Cock Derby" on Nov. 29, Dec. 6, 11 and 13. For an entry fee of P8,800, the guaranteed prize is P2.25 million plus an imported Nissan Serena for the fastest kill champion.

Foreign bets join Cavite tourney

TWELVE foreign bets are set to arrive this week to participate in the annual "Cavite International 7-Cock Derby" on Dec. 1, 3 and 5 at the luxurious Cavite Coliseum. More than 100 local and international cockers are expected to join the three-day cockfest. A total of 97 entries were registered last year. Among the foreign entries are Rep. Benjamin Sablan of Saipan who will field three entries, John Tenorio of Guam, Conrad Burgos of California, Tan Li Ong of Malaysia, Riochi Saito of Japan, Rene Azucena of Tennessee and Dan Gray of Alabama. A top prize of P2 million is at stake while entry is P30,000. For details, contact Ferdie Bautista at 046-970991 or 0918-5674921. Submission of weights is on Nov. 30, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Lagon takes NCA meet limelight

SONNY Lagon, the 2001-2002 Stagfighter of the Year and 2003 Cocker of the Year, renewed his winning ways after his Blue Blade Sweaters scored seven wins out of eight matches during last Friday's finals of the prestigious NCA Grand National Championship 8-Stag Derby hosted by the National Cockers' Association. Lagon said that it was actually a 9-out-of-10 performance because Gerry Ramos, who earned a share of the championship, confirmed to him that two of the stags he fought were also acquired from Blue Blade Farm. Among the top finishers were Rey Briones, Alex Calderon, Willy Villarica, Edu Manzano, Joey & Buboy de los Santos, Boy Lechon & Rene Medina and Bacolod cockers Nani de la Gente & Bobby Doromal.

Eastridge hosts KGB golfest

EASTRIDGE Golf and Country Club in Binangonan, Rizal will be the site of the penultimate tournament of the year for the broadcast golfers of the Kapisanan ng mga Golfers sa Brodkast (KGB) when they tackle this difficult but well-groomed course on Nov. 19. The 18-hole medal play tourney seeks to determine the final monthly winner who will join the 11 previous winners in the Battle of Champions this December. Also at stake are signature KGB trophies for the champions in Class A, B, C and the Ladies and Guest divisions. Supporting the golfest are GMA Network, lawyer Bibit Duavit, former Rizal Gov. Ito Ynares, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and Eastridge Golf and Country Club. Registration starts promptly at 6:30 a.m. with the first flight teeing off at 7 a.m.

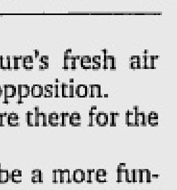
MAYOR'S BADMINTON

BADMINTON TEAM

Volvo badminton team players headed by its president lawyer Alberto Arcilla (2nd from right) are shown at the opening of Mayor's Badminton Cup Tournament Corporate Challenge at the Manila Polo Club recently. Other participating teams are ABS-CBN, Coca-Cola Bottlers, Globe Platinum, Yonex, Metro Magazine, Manila Polo Club and Prulife UK. The event is backed by Volvo Viking Cars Inc., Workfors Plus Events and Project Management.

The brave soul

SPECTATOR



Al S. Mendoza

IF only for the sheer lore behind it, the Ubix-Riviera National Pro-Am deserves our second look. Uncorking its Celebrity Tournament today at Riviera's Langer in Silang, Cavite, people would find instant joy by just leafing through, again, the pages of golf history.

One will literally walk the boulevard of one's dreams with just one snap of the fingers.

The tournament is definitely a wealth of nostalgia and beautiful memories on golf. It started in 2001, but its real existence goes way, way back—in 1957 when visionary men started charting what is now known as the only tournament of its kind in the world.

Where in this planet can you find a tournament that puts two golfers as a team hitting one ball alternately, what with money prizes at stake at that? And they are not supposed to be the best shot-makers in the land.

In short, it is a tournament built both for the "fun and funds of it."

The pro and his amateur should have as much fun as to really enjoy the challenges of the unique format, if not the beauty of the scenery while they likewise sniff through nature's fresh air trying to beat the opposition.

Life's bonuses are there for the taking.

There couldn't be a more fun-filled event than the Ubix-Riviera Pro-Am, an event that, in the words of its perennial patron Bert Bravo, "has now almost reached the superstar status in terms of the influx of participants wanting to join it since we began it in 2001."

Much as the tournament has scored tremendous strides already despite its being still in the infancy stage, its true birth was in 1958, when the Fort Bonifacio National Pro-Am had its inaugural tournament at the Fort Bonifacio golf course. Among the founders of the event still very active in the propagation of the game today are Lucio Yan and Taby Tabaniag.

"I always cherish the thought that *Ka* Lucio and I were part of this monumental project, coming at a time when golf was still being played by a handful of men," said the bull-strong Taby, who turned 84 last Nov. 1 but whose looks and demeanor defy his actual age. "Many of our co-founders are now absent from this imperfect world, but just thinking of them when I am alone makes me feel as though they are still very much around."

Golf is people, indeed, and woe to a golfer who stubbornly plays by his lonesome. At times, the lone ranger that I see plodding on a golf course doesn't even have a caddie.

What a shame.

The Ubix-Riviera National Pro-Am, by its very nature, encourages teamwork to the hilt, a strong statement to life's truism that no man is an island.

In the Ubix-Riviera Pro-Am, whose Celebrity Pro-Am today at Langer will precede its tournament proper from tomorrow up to Saturday, we see people leaning on each other for help.

The mistake of one is the mistake of two.

The success of one is the success of two.

There isn't a shot that isn't shared by two. The partners, like lovers, become one with every shot they make. Like Siamese Twins conjoined in the head, you can never separate one from the other. Fatal.

Many are the anecdotes in past tournaments about pairs almost on their way to victory, only to falter in the end because of one mistake.

In a way, the Ubix-Riviera National Pro-Am imitates life itself. You can't live, exist, on your own. Like the horse-and-carriage thing, one can't proceed, move on, properly without the other.

So once again, hail to Bert Bravo, the brave soul whose intrepidity should be the envy of many. For without him, how can our golfers look forward to a season of joy and hope?

It's in the living, not in the leaving. You leave a fortune without a life of meaning, you are like Marcos: Empty.

Africa Cuppers triumph

KIAWAH ISLAND, South Carolina—South Africa's Trevor Immelman and Rory Sabbatini combined to shoot a 1-over-par 73 Sunday for a four-stroke victory at the World Cup.

Immelman and Sabbatini finished at 13-under 275 and gave South Africa its second World Cup title in three years and fifth overall. Ernie Els and Retief Goosen teamed up to win in 2001, when the World Cup was played in Japan.

The United States team of Jim Furyk and Justin Leonard was in contention until going bogey-triple bogey at Nos. 12 and 13. The Americans shot a 3-over 75 and finished in a tie for fifth at 4-under 284.

The South Africans, who each earned $700,000 for the win, started the alternate-stroke round with a seven-stroke lead over Furyk and Leonard and France's Thomas Levet and Raphael Jacquelin

But it was England's Paul Casey and Justin Rose who made a charge for the lead. Ten strokes back at the start of the round, the Englishmen shot a 5-under 67 and settled for second at 9-under 279. *AP*

Federer whips Agassi

FEDERER celebrates. REUTERS

HOUSTON—Roger Federer of Switzerland capped a perfect tournament with another sublime performance, beating Andre Agassi, 6-3, 6-0, 6-4, in a rain-interrupted final to win the season-ending Tennis Masters Cup for his tour-high seventh title of 2003.

Federer earned $1,520,000 Sunday and moved up to No. 2 in the rankings, behind Andy Roddick. The Wimbledon champion went 5-0 against an elite field, including victories over the other reigning Grand Slam champions: Agassi (Australian Open), Roddick (US Open) and Juan Carlos Ferrero of Spain (French Open).

"This week has been great for me," Federer said. "I thought I was in the toughest group, with the toughest opponents, and I came out winning each match against really great players."

By the end of the event's most lopsided final since 1997, Agassi would shake his head after losing points. He never managed one break point, while Federer conjured 39 winners, three times as many as Agassi.

"I'd just like to congratulate Roger, not just for a great match today but great tennis all week. You deserve to win this tournament, and it's an inspiration to watch you move and play," Agassi said during the trophy presentation.

Agassi is 33, Federer 22, and it didn't help Agassi's cause that all four of his previous matches went the distance, including a round-robin loss to the Swiss star.

"I wish I had more for you today," Agassi told the crowd. "It just wasn't quite enough to get the job done." *AP*

'Tac' shatters shooting mark

NATIONAL shooting champion Nathaniel "Pac" Padilla sparkled anew Sunday by eclipsing his four-year-old record in the center fire pistol event at the PSC range in Fort Bonifacio.

Padilla, 39-year-old general manager of Spring Cooking Oil, put together 293 and 290 in precision and dueling, respectively, for a 583-point output that broke his Philippine mark by one point and easily beat Gilbert Escobar (545) and older brother Donald (540) in the final leg of the PNSA selection series for the 2003 Vietnam Southeast Asian Games.

"I'm happy because despite my busy schedule, I was able to break my record, said Padilla, a four-time SEAG and nine-time SEASA gold medalist. "At least, my special training under my father (former Olympian Tom Ong) is paying off."

Padilla also topped the rapid fire and standard pistol events with 573 and 554, respectively.

Susan Aguado, Emerito Concepcion, Rachel Marie Capili, Carolino Gonzales and Edwin Fernandez also ruled their respective events.

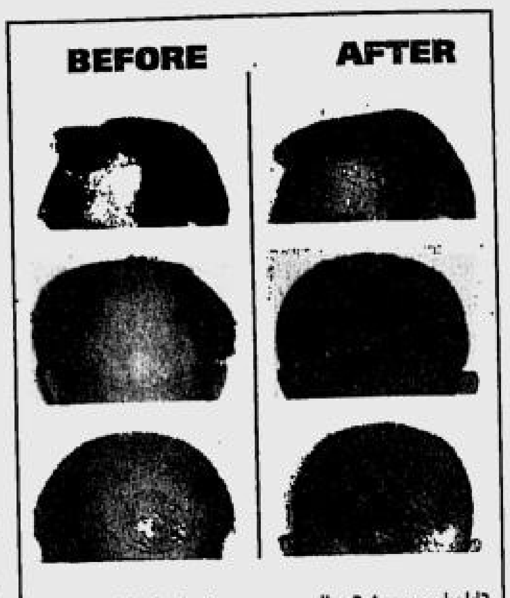
Welcoat faces Fash; Viva eyes 1st win

GAMES TODAY (Pasig Sports Center)
1:45 p.m.—Welcoat vs Fash Liquid
3:45 p.m.—Sunkist-UST vs Viva

WELCOAT Paints tries to sustain a hot start while Fash Dishwashing Liquid hopes to get back to its winning ways when the league's titans renew their rivalry today in the 2003 PBL Platinum Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

With three straight wins, momentum is definitely on Welcoat's side in its 1:45 p.m. date with Fash.

Sunkist-UST and Viva Mineral Water-FEU tangle at 3:45 p.m. with the Water Force expected to notch their first win after dropping their first two assignments.



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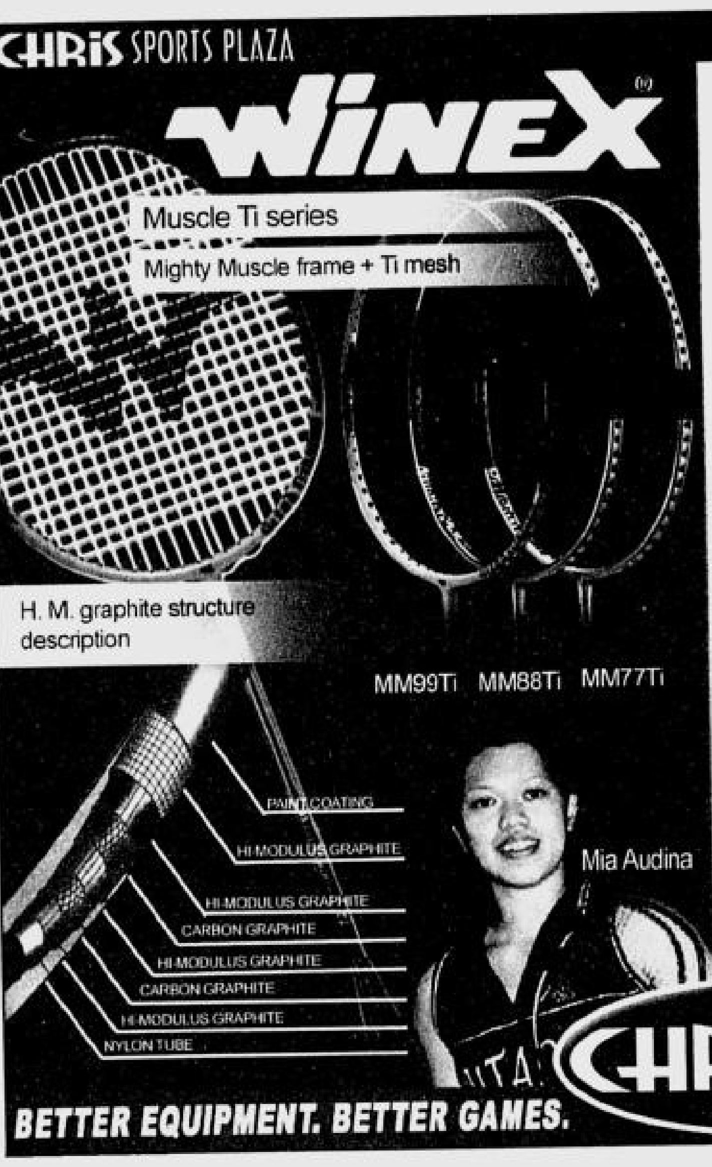
WATCH TeleAga in PTV Channel 4 on Wednesday, November 19, 2003, at 7:00 a.m., for Dr. Pineda and a hair transplant patient's interview in Spotlight, Ms. Bernadette Allison's segment.



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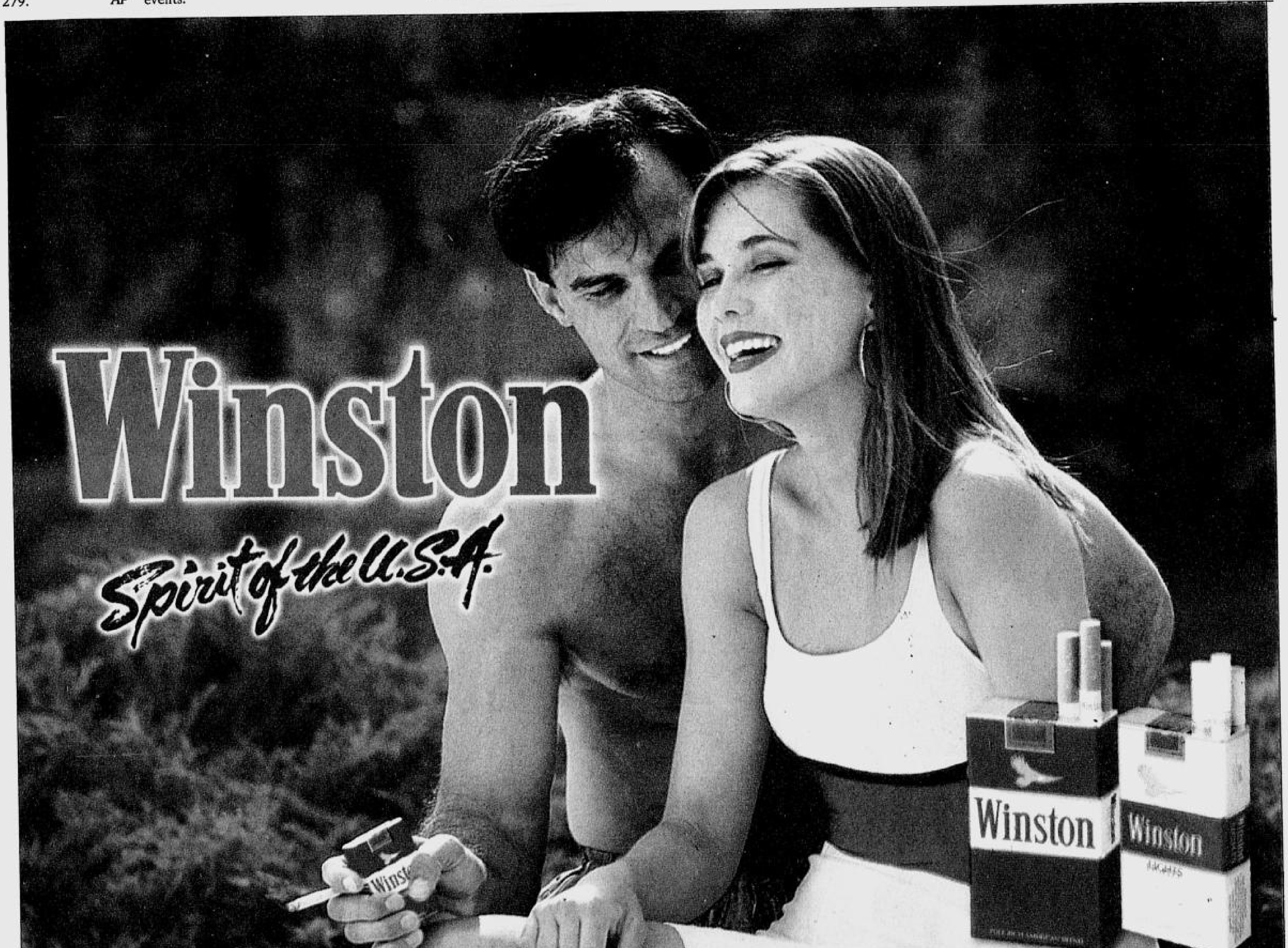

Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

Patricia: Marc will always have a soft spot in my heart

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

PATRICIA Javier gamely showed me the video of her American doctor suitor whom she met when she had a show in the US recently.

In the taped message, he was telling Pat not to forget him and other sweet stuff that only both of them can really understand. I must say that he is definitely star material.

Pat says he is planning to come over and visit her for the holidays. She still can't say for sure if she will say "yes" to him already, although she is open to the idea of relocating to the US if fate would make them end up together.

Pat says he is very fond of kids. In fact he's raring to have kids of his own.

I teased, "So are you willing to be the mom of his kids and ruin your figure for a couple of months?"

She laughed. "Why not? I'll just exercise even when I'm preggy so I won't gain that much weight." With her sex appeal, no doubt she will still look like a bombshell even when her tummy becomes heavy with a baby.

Some quarters insist that things ain't over yet between her and **Marc Nelson**.

Theirs is one touching love story. Even when they still had no money to count, Marc and Pat had each other to count on.

Pat sighed, "Marc will always have a soft spot in my heart. *Kung kami talaga, eh 'di kami pa rin* in the end. For now, he just wants to be sure that whoever I get involved with will take care of me. I also wish him the same. We are both unattached and we look out for each other. I know that he is dating and that's fine with me."

Whether it's Marc or the doctor, whoever wins Pat's heart for keeps can be assured that her perfect vital statistics only come second to the kind of love she gives, which is immeasurable.

Maureen's way

I LIKE the way **Maureen Larrazabal** handles all the nasty intrigues hurled her way. She tries to be blasé about it all, but when she is prodded to give her comments regarding the issues that plague her, she answers you in a straightforward way. No "show biz" answers from this girl. She doesn't come across as defensive, either. She just tells it like it is.

Take the raging rumor that said her close friend **Ara Mina** snatched away her boyfriend (**Fausti Tambunting**, who happens to be **Lara Morena**'s ex-husband). Maureen explained, "Before the rumors got out of hand, I went straight to Ara and asked her what's the real score. We are that close so I believe every word she says. And she's pretty enough not to have to snatch another girl's boyfriend.

"We used to go out on group dates with my ex and Ara. Sometimes **Jomari (Yllana)** joined us. Somehow, Fausti and Ara got close. So now that (Fausti and I) have split up, I cannot tell them not to be friends with each other anymore."

She still has not fully recovered from the breakup, that's why she's not yet ready to fall in love again yet. If she could have her way, she would want to patch things up with Fausti.

"Three years is three years," she said. "*Medyo malalim na rin ang pinagsamahan namin, sayang din*. But it's beyond my control. I can only hope and pray. I have nothing but kind words to say about him. Maybe it was the wrong time for us."

From a romantic fool like me, my unsolicited advice to Maureen and to girls in the same (sinking!) boat as she: When love is really right for you, there's no such thing as wrong timing. True love always hits the spot.

'Disyembre 25'

CHRISTMAS beckons even as I search for a beacon now that my mom is gone. But I will still try to have a merry Christmas to live up to my mom's "Santa Claus" nature.

Speaking of Christmas, one thing that somehow puts me in a Christmas mood is True Faith's original Christmas song "Disyembre 25," written by the irreplaceable vocalist **Medwin Marfil**. Anything sung by True Faith lifts my spirits, especially now that they need boosting.

"Disyembre 25" is part of the album "Christmas Prayers," which Arts Co. & Dangerous Inc. will release soon. Also featured on the album are **Joey Ayala** with **Cynthia Alexander**, The Brownbeat Allstars, **Darryl Shy**, **Noli Aurillo**, **Chikoy Pura**, **Bo Razon**, Color It Red, Trop Dep, **Lei Garcia** and Razorback.

Catch the True Faith gigs this month: Nov. 18, Padi's Edsa Central; Nov. 20, Padi's Araneta; Nov. 21, Baguio; Nov. 28. Virgin Café; Nov. 29, Tarlac; Nov. 30, Lucena.

Aubrey's 'baby'

ACTOR **JP Obligacion** swears he is not the father of **Aubrey Miles'** alleged baby.

Isn't it quite odd that they are pinpointing the father when they can't even produce the baby?

That's show biz Pinoy style for you.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com

'PRIVATE CONVERSATION' WITH DR. BECKY

Boy Abunda puts Dr. Rebecca B. Singson on the hot seat to discuss women's health-related issues in the latest edition of "Private Conversation," to air on Thursday, Nov. 20 at 9 p.m. on ANC. Dr. Singson graduated magna cum laude with a degree in BS Biology from the University of the Philippines, completed medicine at UP-PGH, and took up post-graduate studies in Europe. She set up her obstetrics and gynecology practice at the Makati Medical Center and the Asian Hospital and Medical Center. "Private Conversation" is replayed Thursday midnight, Friday at 5 a.m. and 11 a.m., and Sunday at 9 p.m. on Channel 21 of SkyCable.

SHOW TIME

'Starstruck' 2 down, 12 to go

By Marinel R. Cruz

CRISTINE Reyes hopes to someday win an acting award like her half-sister Ara Mina. But unlike her *Ate*, who entered show biz via the bold route, Cristine would rather stick to "wholesome" roles.

"I want to make a name for myself and be known for my own talent and capabilities," said the daughter of Francis Klenk and Romeo Reyes. "I'm determined to win so I would be able to help my family."

Ara Mina is Klenk's daughter with Quezon City Rep. Chuck Mathay.

Cristine said she is very close to Ara Mina and gets hurt by negative talk about her sister.

"They don't have the right to say nasty things about my *Ate* because they don't know her," she said. "Whenever she cries over these things, we try to cheer her up and tell her that we're beside her no matter what."

What Cristine wanted to win is "Starstruck," GMA 7's newest reality-based talent search, which was inspired by the US hit show "American Idol" on Fox TV.

Cristine was one of the 14 finalists—7 boys, 7 girls—in the search. From the final 14 of "Starstruck" will emerge just two winners—a boy and a girl—who will be added to GMA 7's stable of stars. The 14 finalists, selected from about 300 applicants, have been going through workshops and real-life challenges.

Each Friday, one finalist is eliminated until just the two final winners remain. Two Fridays ago, first to be voted out was Alvin Aragon, a dusky looker. Last Friday, the next one to drop out was Cristine.

Director Cayetano

"The reality-TV format is more complicated than anything we've seen," said the "Starstruck" director, Lino Cayetano, in his directorial debut. "Its formula is still evolving. Nobody in the Philippines has ever done it before."

Cayetano, who studied filmmaking at the University of the Philippines and in New York, had to stop teaching film in UP to work on "Starstruck." He is the youngest child of senator Renato Cayetano, who died of abdominal cancer last June.

The young Cayetano had given up half of his liver to be transplanted to his ailing father.

"This job is very demanding," said the young director. "We air taped episodes from Monday to Thursday and then go live on Friday, which is the day we eliminate one contestant."

The show's theme varies every week. In one episode, the contestants are given dance lessons by the Sex Bomb Dancers and are asked to perform with the sexy girls in a show in Laguna.

"We're talking about raw talents here," said Cayetano during the show's recent launch at GMA 7 in Quezon City. "Soon they will be brought to bars and clubs where judges can see them perform."

He said singing and acting workshops for the contestants have not been finalized yet. "Maybe we could bring them to the set of a soap opera and see how they act," he said, "or make them sing in a neck-deep pond a la Regine Velasquez as part of their vocal training."

Tyron's prowess

Finalist Tyron Perez, 18, is confident he would be able to go through all the challenges with ease, especially the acting part.

"I think I would excel in acting," said the Bulacan State University freshman. "I look up to Piolo Pascual and Christopher de Leon as actors."

Tyron has attended acting workshops under director Peque Gallaga and former actress Ann Villegas. Come December, he will be seen in the big screen in Jose Javier Reyes' "Malikmata," one of the official entries in the Metro Manila Film Festival.

The youngest of the six children of farmer-parents from Tarlac, Tyron said he had to quit school this year because the family could no longer afford the tuition. He models for a salon and a new line of clothes and bags.

"If I win, the prize will all go to my mother," he said.

Katrina's courage

Katrina Halili, 17, said her mother Marilou and stepfather Cesar are very excited about her being chosen one of the "Starstruck" finalists.

The high school student from the Manila Patriotic School in Binondo admitted that her mom broke up with her dad when Katrina was only 8 months old. She has not seen her father since, Katrina said.

"I never got to know my real father," she said. "My parents got separated but I'm not ashamed of it. I'm mature enough to understand that I cannot force two people who can't live together under one roof."

Katrina looks up to singer Regine Velasquez and actress Rufa Mae Quinto. Because of "Starstruck," she was able to meet her idols when all the finalists appeared on the Sunday noon show "SOP," where Regine and Rufa Mae are hosts.

"I love it whenever I hear Regine sing 'Hanggang Ngayon' with Ogie (Alcasid)," said Katrina. "Seeing Rufa Mae makes me wish th

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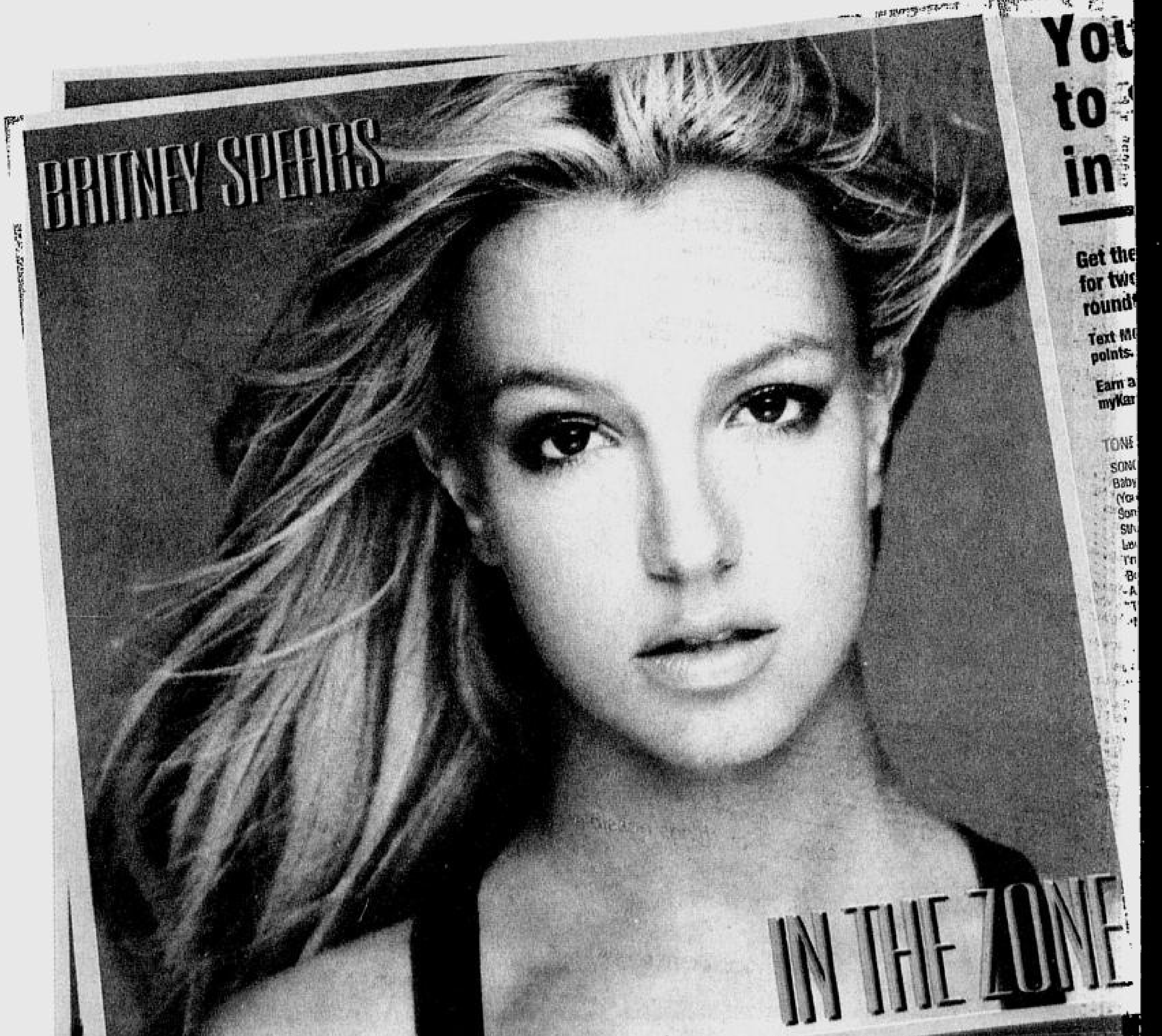
MINUS 1. (Clockwise from front) Cristine Reyes (ou
Mercado, Katrina Halili, Nadine Samonte, Sheena Y



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

t), Yasmien Kurdi, Jennylyn
vette Halili and Jade Lopez.

6 REMAINING. (Clockwise from left) Anton de la Paz, Mark Angelo Herras, Tyron Perez, Dion Joseph Ignacio, Christian Esteban, Rainier Joseph Castillo and Alvin Aragon (out)

at someday, I would also do sexy-
y roles like her."

s duty

Joseph Ignacio, 17, of Siniloan,
, has an invalid father and a mom
ells viands to support the family.
father was a tricycle driver who
accident.
is the eldest of five children, and
ngest is a 3-year-old girl. Dion said he now carries the responsibility of supporting the family.

"Winning would mean a lot to me and my family," said Dion, who described himself in the show's teaser as "proudly *promdi*."

Just two months ago, the teener was also chosen as one of the finalists in the Circle of 10 modeling search.

So far, the finalists have been trimmed down to 12: Katrina, Tyron, Dion, Rainer Joseph Castillo, Christian Esteban, Sheena Yvette Halili, Mark Angelo Herras, Yasmien Kurdi, Jade Lopez, Jennylyn Mercado, Anton de la Paz and Nadine Samonte.

"Starstruck" airs Monday to Friday, 7:30-8 p.m., hosted by Dingdong Dantes and Nancy Castiglione. Viewers can vote on who they want to win by texting.

DID YOU KNOW...

Hans Montenegro was limping, using a cane and with his leg in a plaster cast, when he hosted the Me Magazine fashion show and party last Thursday night at The Loft in Rockwell at the Power Plant Mall in Makati. Hans had a badminton accident. But his girlfriend, **Maritoni Fernandez,** was there to take his hand and help him up and down the stairs at The Loft. The fashion show-party had movie queen **Susan Roces** as special guest and was organized by Me Magazine editor in chief **Cathy Babao-Guballa.** Cathy's proud mom, **Caridad Sanchez,** was also there to help her daughter entertain the guests.

Innovative marketing and distribution scheme

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

FOR A moment there, some show biz observers fretted that "The Matrix Revolutions" wouldn't do as well at the box office as the first two installments of the movie trilogy.

Well, not to worry, worldwide grosses for the first five days of the screening of "Revolutions" are out, and it's official: Not only is the movie a huge hit, it has even topped the record-setting debut of "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers," which made $188 million on its first five days of release all over the world. The new record set by "Revolutions": $204 million.

Aside from its stunning fight scenes, futuristic gizmos and iconic characters, "Revolutions" has its innovative marketing and distribution scheme going for it: To beat would-be film pirates to the draw, it was released simultaneously on a record-setting 18,000 screens, in 94 countries.

Of course, some viewers here thought the "saturation" screening strategy was an extreme case of overkill, especially when some mall cineplexes in Metro Manila devoted most of their screens to the "Revolutions" blitzkrieg.

But the situation has pretty much normalized now and other viewing options have presented themselves, so feelings of being manipulated have abated.

All told, the "Matrix" trilogy is expected to eventually earn close to $2 billion, DVD, video and video game sales included. Sure, "Titanic" did that whopping kind of business all by its lonesome, but the "Matrix" franchise's feat is still a huge achievement.

The trilogy's success has helped make franchise filmmaking the "in" thing in Hollywood these days.

It could also influence trends on the local film scene, which has had its own blockbuster franchises, like the "Panday" and "Darna" movie series.

The problem with franchises is the risk that their producers initially have to take. If you bankroll three franchise installments in a row before the first movie is even shown, you could end up with triple duds on your hands, if moviegoers don't get turned on by your franchise's first installment.

But the producers of the "Matrix" and "Lord of the Rings" franchises appear to have bet their nest eggs on winners, so that's all to the good. We'd just hate to be the producer of the first huge film franchise that bombs!

Chiqui on cruise ship

IBC-13's three-part "Travel" series featuring the Continental Airlines-Princess Cruise tour of New England and Canada ends on Nov. 18 at 10 p.m., with host **Chiqui Roa-Puno** showing viewers the Golden Princess cruise ship's facilities, and the Pinoys working on board.

Filipinos make up at least 60 percent of the ship's kitchen and service staff. Chiqui joined the cruise with 26 Philippine travel agents.

Also featured in the Nov. 18 episode are Camarines Norte and its unique attractions, like its immense gold deposits.

'Matrix' evaluated

TECHNICAL Assessment: Above-average. Moral Assessment: Acceptable. Rating: For viewers 14 and above.

Cinema, the Catholic Initiative for Enlightened Movie Appreciation, cites: ". . . The display of fantastic special effects and the flawless execution of well-choreographed fight scenes, as well as the perfect blending of computer-generated images with the stunts of kung-fu master performers.

"Some scenes stand out: One is the battle for supremacy and survival as the humans make their last stand in Zion. The terrifying images may give some viewers a glimpse of Armageddon. Another is the final showdown where Neo makes the supreme sacrifice and is later enveloped in beauty and light.

"Some more demanding viewers may regard this as old stuff, but this overwhelming movie can be exciting and entertaining, although exhausting. The production design, with its images of cyberspace, is noteworthy . . .

"The movie underlines the truism: Love conquers. Other values depicted are courage, persistence and trust. Neo's determination in the final confrontation enables him to conquer the evil self and triumph.

"The film may also leave some questions whose answers we have to find within ourselves. Like, the machines which are so important in our lives—should we allow them to control us? The movie leaves us musing and thinking.

Bon Jovi goes acoustic

BON JOVI's latest album, "The Left Feels Right," is a collection of his hits entirely re-crafted in new acoustic versions. The cuts include "Wanted Dead or Alive," "Livin' on a Prayer," "Bad Medicine," "It's My Life," "Lay Your Hands on Me," "You Give Love a Bad Name," "Bed of Roses" and "Keep the Faith."

Fans gate-crash Mariah concert

From page A26

Concert producers MTV Philippines and Tommy Hilfiger Watches deployed 160 ushers and 54 bouncers for the show.

Mariah's "Charmbracelet Tour 2003" started at 9:45 p.m. with the A Cafellas opening the show for the pop diva, who sang 15 songs, including her version of the Jackson 5 original "I'll Be There." She sang the Mowtown classic with R&B artist Trey Lorenz, Mariah's most popular backup singer.

The pop diva had seven costume changes.

For her opening number, "Heartbreaker," the 33-year-old singer wore her signature silver halter top and miniskirt. After singing three more songs, Mariah changed into a dainty blue floral dress and sang "Honey" from her "Butterfly" album. She then slipped into a sexy backless gown and sang "My Saving Grace."

"This song is about my life and my faith," said the singer who was reported to have suffered an "emotional breakdown" last year.

Mariah ended the two-hour show with her hit song "Hero," wearing a cream dress with ostrich feathers.

A few hours before the concert, Mariah chatted with Ryan Ignacio, 19, a fan who wrote the GMA 7 public service program "Wish Ko Lang," requesting that he meet his idol.

"Mariah was really touched to see Ryan that she hugged him," said Melo Esguerra, "Wish Ko Lang" executive producer. "Ryan was so overwhelmed."

GMA 7 paid for Ryan's round-trip ticket to Zamboaga del Sur and his weekend stay at the Linden Suites in Ortigas Center.

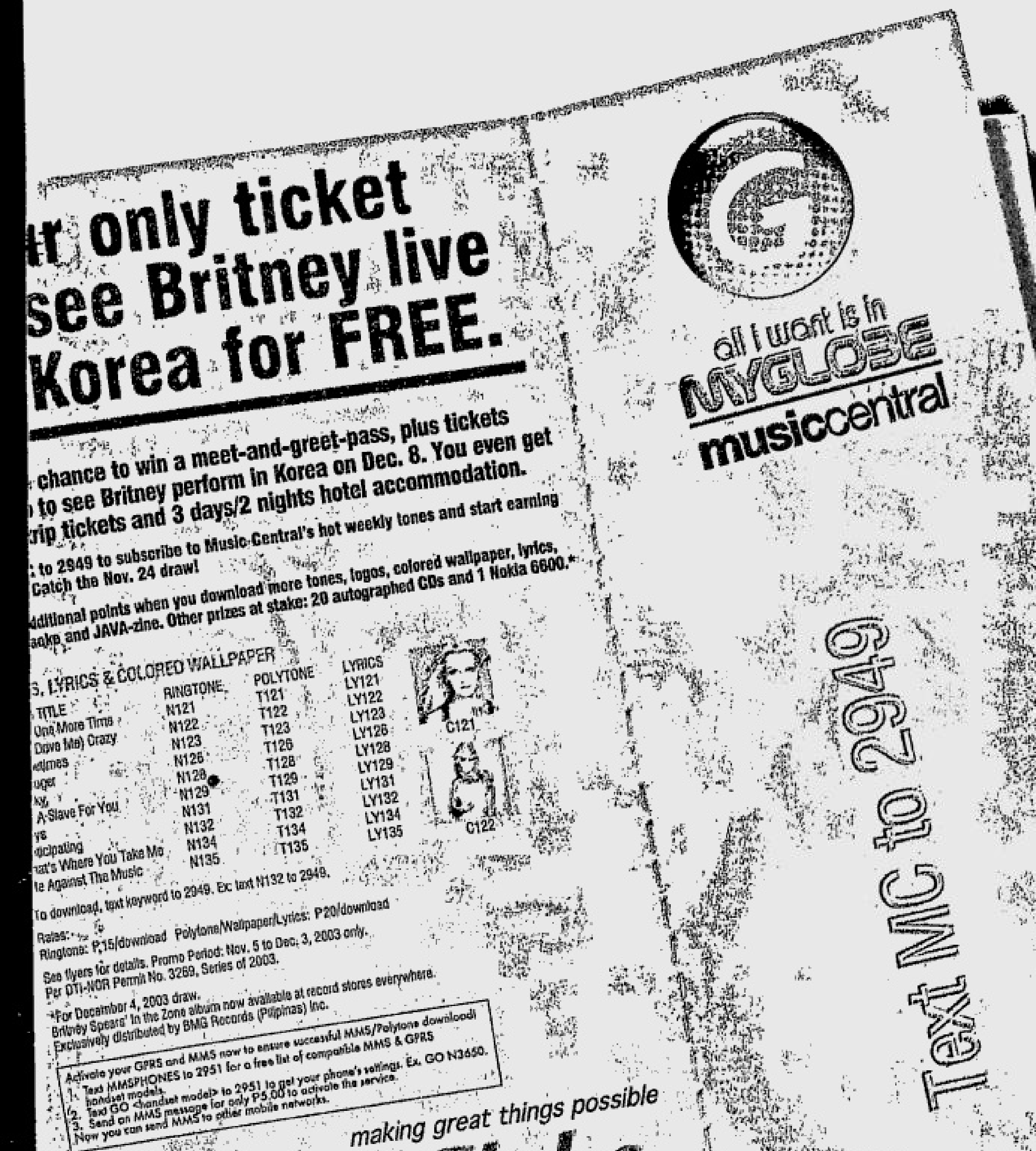
Mariah arrived in Manila from Shanghai, China, at 9:05 p.m. on Saturday. She had to be whisked to the presidential lounge of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport when airport police could not control screaming fans, which included airport employees.

But Mariah posed for press photographers after her arrival, INQUIRER photographer Roger Carpio said.

The singer left Manila yesterday at 3:55 p.m. on board a Singapore Airlines plane to New York City.

The entourage, which included backup dancers, singers and band members, were not given VIP treatment when they left Naia at 1 p.m. yesterday, said Carpio.

"They lined up and personally checked in their baggage just like the other passengers," he said.



r only ticket
see Britney live
Korea for FREE.

chance to win a meet-and-greet-pass, plus tickets
to see Britney perform in Korea on Dec. 8. You even get
rip tickets and 3 days/2 nights hotel accommodation.
to 2949 to subscribe to Music Central's hot weekly tones and start earning
Catch the Nov. 24 draw!
dditional points when you download more tones, logos, colored wallpaper, lyrics,
aoke and JAVA-zine. Other prizes at stake: 20 autographed CDs and 1 Nokia 6600.*

S, LYRICS & COLORED WALLPAPER

TITLE	RINGTONE	POLYTONE	LYRICS
One More Time	N121	T121	LY121
Drive Me) Crazy	N122	T122	LY122
times	N123	T123	LY123
uger	N126	T126	LY126
ky	N128	T128	LY128
A Slave For You	N129	T129	LY129
ys	N131	T131	LY131
icipating	N132	T132	LY132
at's Where You Take Me	N134	T134	LY134
e Against The Music	N135	T135	LY135

C121
C122

To download, text keyword to 2949. Ex: text N132 to 2949.
Rates:
Ringtone: P15/download Polytone/Wallpaper/Lyrics: P20/download
See flyers for details. Promo Period: Nov. 5 to Dec. 3, 2003 only.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3269, Series of 2003.
*For December 4, 2003 draw.
Britney Spears' In the Zone album now available at record stores everywhere.
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Activate your GPRS and MMS now to ensure successful MMS/Polytone downloads!
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Now you can send MMS to other mobile networks.

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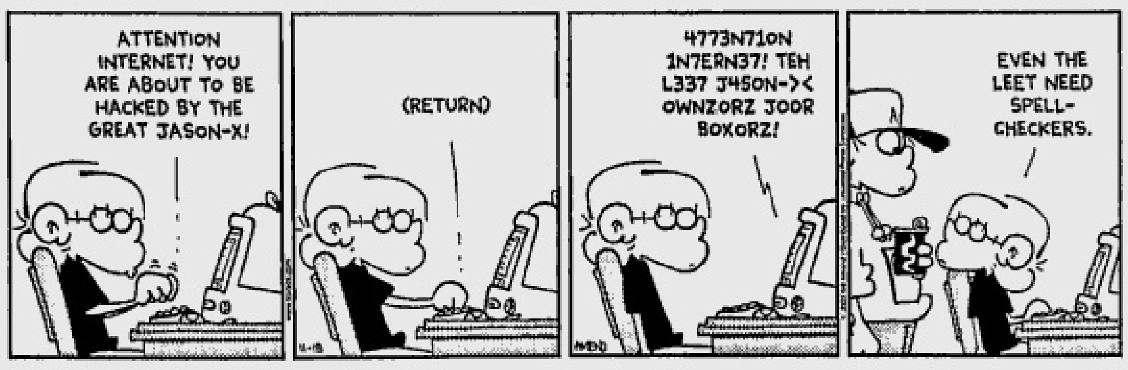
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
ComicRelief
e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2003

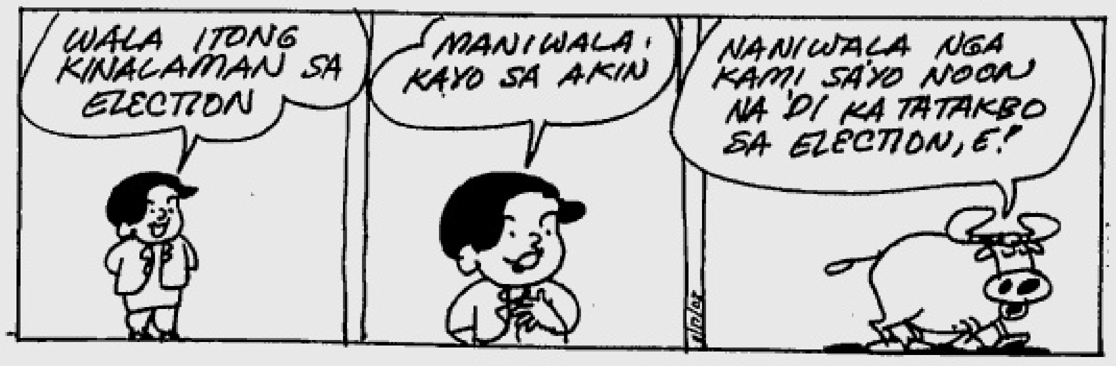
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


ATTENTION INTERNET! YOU ARE ABOUT TO BE HACKED BY THE GREAT JASON-X!
(RETURN)
4773N710N 1N7ERN37! TEH L337 J450N->< OWNZORZ JOOR BOXORZ!
EVEN THE LEET NEED SPELL-CHECKERS.

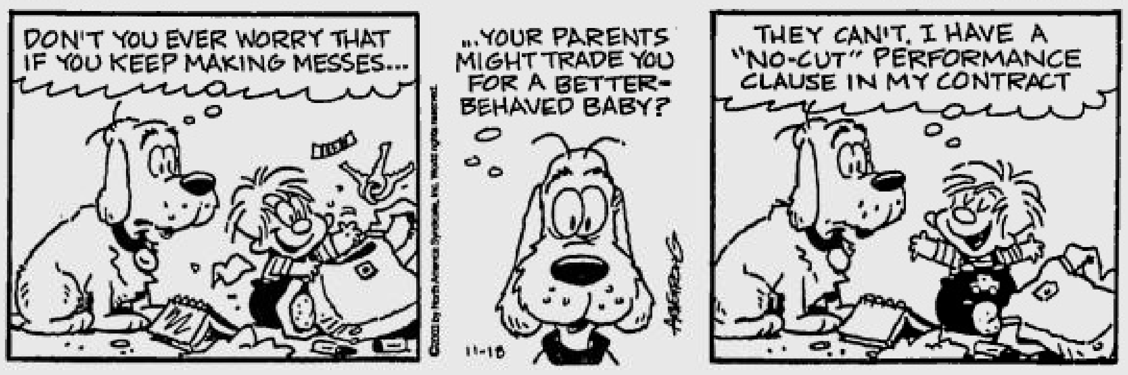
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


WALA ITONG KINALAMAN SA ELECTION
MANIWALA! KAYO SA AKIN
NANIWALA NGA KAMI SA'YO NOON NA 'DI KA TATAKBO SA ELECTION, E!

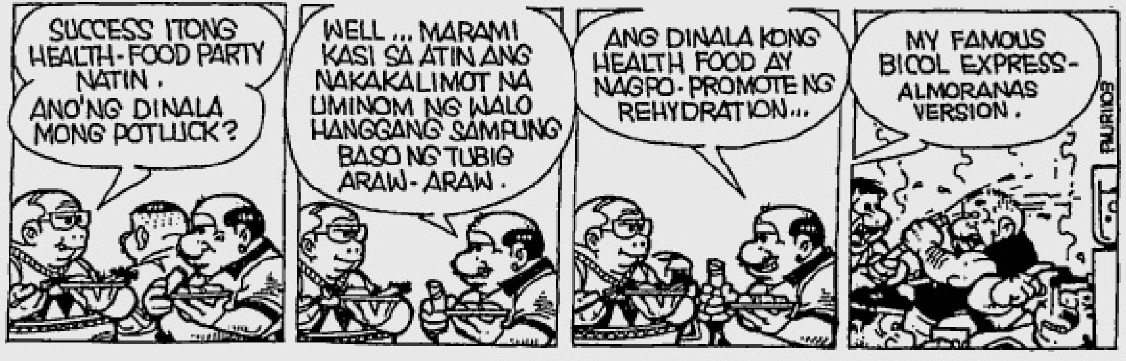
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


DON'T YOU EVER WORRY THAT IF YOU KEEP MAKING MESSES...
...YOUR PARENTS MIGHT TRADE YOU FOR A BETTER-BEHAVED BABY?
THEY CAN'T. I HAVE A "NO-CUT" PERFORMANCE CLAUSE IN MY CONTRACT
11-18

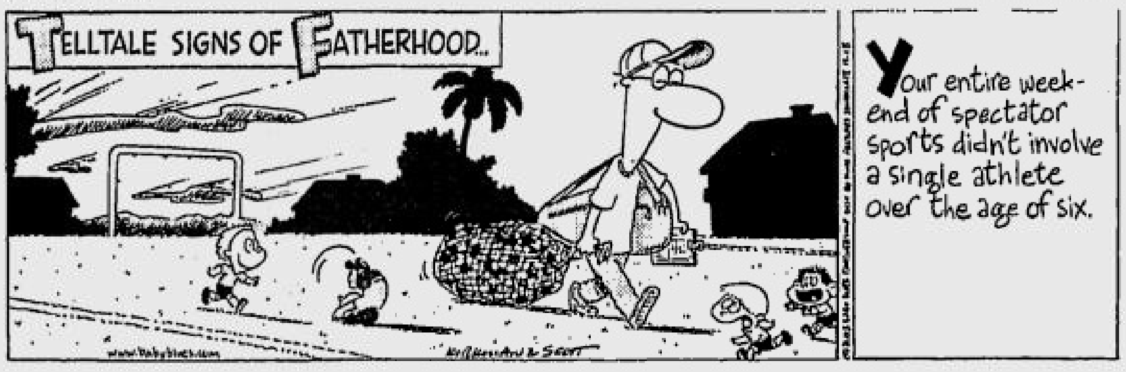
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SUCCESS ITONG HEALTH-FOOD PARTY NATIN. ANO'NG DINALA MONG POTLUCK?
WELL ... MARAMI KASI SA ATIN ANG NAKAKALIMOT NA UMINOM NG WALO HANGGANG SAMPUNG BASO NG TUBIG ARAW-ARAW.
ANG DINALA KONG HEALTH FOOD AY NAGPO-PROMOTE NG REHYDRATION...
MY FAMOUS BICOL EXPRESS-ALMORANAS VERSION.

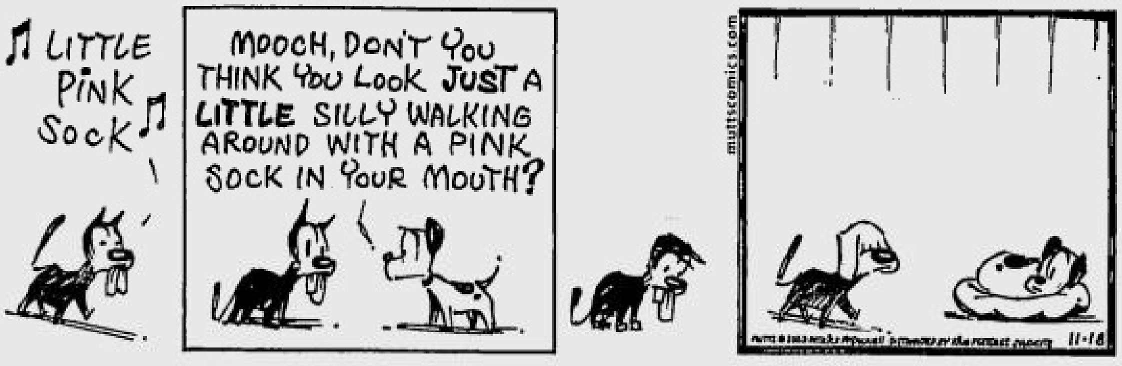
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


TELLTALE SIGNS OF FATHERHOOD..
Your entire weekend of spectator sports didn't involve a single athlete over the age of six.
www.babyblues.com
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

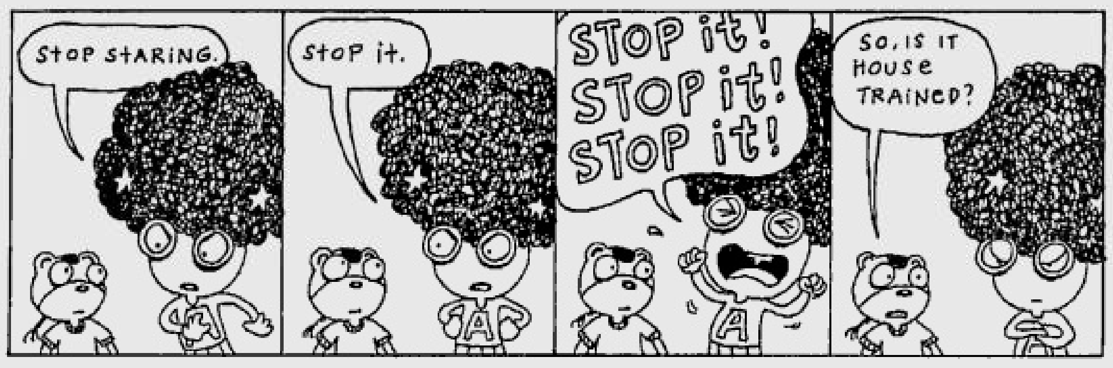
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


♫ LITTLE PINK SOCK ♫
MOOCH, DON'T YOU THINK YOU LOOK JUST A LITTLE SILLY WALKING AROUND WITH A PINK SOCK IN YOUR MOUTH?
muttscomics.com
11-18

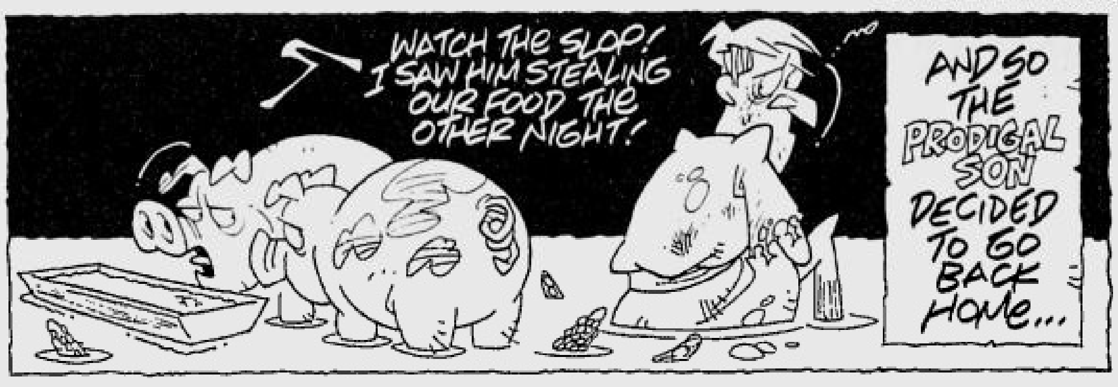
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


STOP STARING.
STOP it.
STOP it! STOP it! STOP it!
SO, IS IT HOUSE TRAINED?

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


WATCH THE SLOP! I SAW HIM STEALING OUR FOOD THE OTHER NIGHT!
AND SO THE PRODIGAL SON DECIDED TO GO BACK HOME...

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Although on the outside you appear cool and collected, inwardly you are emotionally volatile! You're ambitious and always active in your social milieu. Your intuition is uncannily accurate. You were born to lead. There is far more to you than meets the eye. Get ready for one of the most powerful, rewarding years of your life.

Birthdate of: Margaret Atwood, writer; Elizabeth Perkins, actress; Chloe Sevigny, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're attracted to the study of mysticism, astrology, fantasy and unusual subjects today. You want a deeper understanding of hidden knowledge.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Keep your expectations of others as realistic as you can. You're inclined to expect too much of important people today, but they're just ordinary people, like you.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Conversations with friends and partners are interesting today, because you are truly in tune on a deeper level. It's as if you have X-ray vision.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your impulse to help a co-worker on the job today is a good one. You're not a sucker if you assist those who need you; you're a minor hero.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a marvelous day for any kind of creative activity. Your ability to visualize, fantasize and dream up original concepts and ideas is wonderful!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): If you can possibly relax at home today, do so. Someone in your family might want to confide in you today. Listen with a sympathetic ear, even if you don't agree.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Double-check your work today, because your mind is full of fantasy and daydreaming. Since you don't really feel like working at all today, if you can get out of it, by all means do so!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Be extremely careful about spending your money today. Exotic items and luxurious temptations could make you spend far more than you want to. Don't talk yourself into anything.

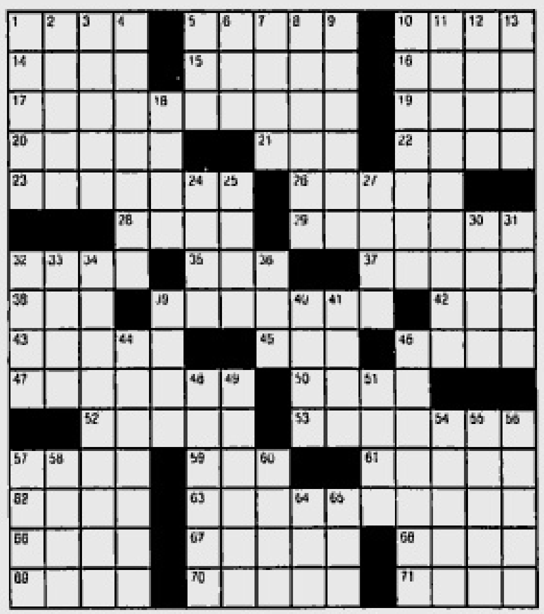
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Your sensitivity is aroused, and you seem to be more aware of the world around you, on a gut level. Don't be afraid to show others your tender, shy side. (They will respond.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're dreaming about buying luxurious items today. You wonder if this could possibly come true in the future. Your mind is full of wants, possibilities and pleasant wishes.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): If you need the help of someone important, ask this person today. Nothing is guaranteed; nevertheless, you can count on the fact that people feel extra sympathetic today.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Trust your reaction about future possibilities for your career and your general life direction. Today, you are tuned in to the pulse of the universe.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By John Underwood
New York, NY

11/18/03

ACROSS

1 Denuded
5 Lovable cigar brand?
10 Falls back
14 Arabian port
15 Highway to Fairbanks
16 Shine brightly
17 Marginal
19 Wife of 46D
20 Rumbling with rumors
21 Morse unit
22 Crooner Bennett
23 Pampas homemakers
26 Bestow upon
28 Brad or spike
29 Flier's backup
32 Be in accord
35 Buck lover
37 Steeple top
38 Jug handle
39 Direct route
42 Bobbsey twin
43 Contemptuous smile
45 G-man employer
46 Penny
47 Empress of the past
50 Foot twelfth
52 Sample recordings
53 Top angels
57 Baby shower gift
59 Chute-__-chute
61 Time for a shower?
62 Habeas corpus, e.g.
63 Ultimate cost
66 Clearasil's target
67 Tell's missile
68 Frosted
69 Rid oneself of
70 Tractor maker
71 Monster's loch

DOWN

1 Rum cakes
2 Clay-and-straw brick
3 Second airing
4 Receiver's goal
5 Black goo
6 Mansion wing
7 Kind of rain
8 Raving lunatic
9 Left jab, right cross
10 Vanity voyage?
11 Pedigree
12 Beethoven's birthplace
13 Rock from side to side
18 Pound of poetry
24 Assistant
25 Gin cocktail flavoring
27 Basilica section
30 Setting of Camus' "The Plague"
31 Camp shelter
32 Witty remark
33 Fleming and McKellen
34 Depression Era queue
36 Reindeer tender?
39 Fedora feature
40 Nile bird
41 Five after four
44 Put up
46 Old-time comic Charlie
48 So-so
49 On land
51 Stuff
54 Cost
55 Dancer Gregory
56 Racers on runners
57 "__ brillig..."
58 Foot feature
60 To be in Tours
64 High crag
65 Part of IOU

Monday's Puzzle Solved

R	E	C	A	P	■	A	R	C	H	■	E	A	R	N
E	T	U	D	E	■	S	O	H	O	■	B	R	I	O
F	A	T	H	E	R	K	N	O	W	S	B	E	S	T
S	L	E	E	V	E	■	■	S	E	E	■	N	E	E
■	■	■	R	E	V	I	V	E	■	A	W	A	R	D
S	H	O	E	D	■	C	A	N	D	L	E	■	■	■
L	A	O	■	■	C	O	N	■	R	E	A	L	M	S
O	Z	Z	I	E	A	N	D	H	A	R	R	I	E	T
B	E	E	F	U	P	■	Y	E	T	■	■	D	O	A
■	■	■	F	R	E	A	K	S	■	C	R	O	W	N
T	O	K	Y	O	■	L	E	S	S	E	E	■	■	■
U	N	O	■	P	B	S	■	■	O	R	N	A	T	E
L	E	A	V	E	I	T	T	O	B	E	A	V	E	R
S	I	L	O	■	L	O	O	N	■	A	M	O	N	G
A	L	A	N	■	K	N	E	E	■	L	E	N	D	S

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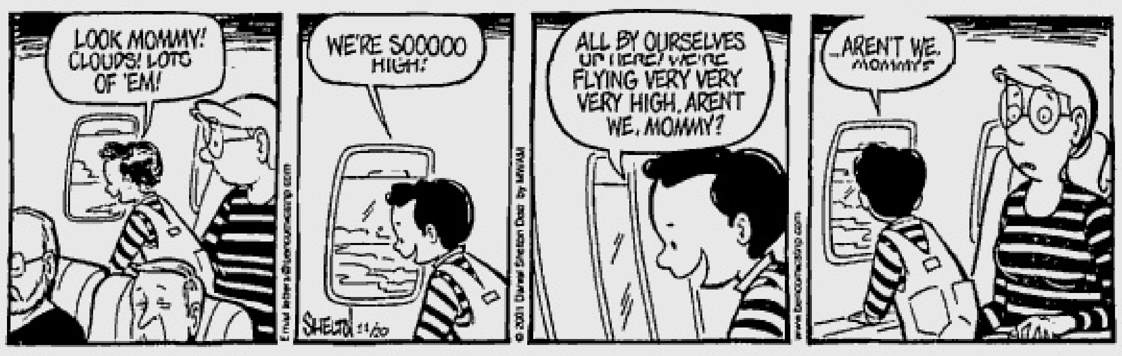
11/18/03

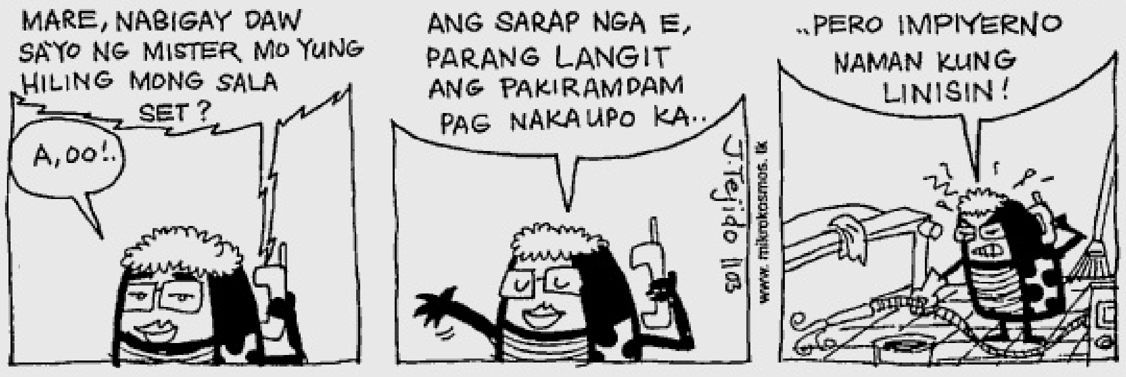
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


LOOK MOMMY! CLOUDS! LOTS OF 'EM!
WE'RE SOOOOO HIGH!
ALL BY OURSELVES UP HERE! WE'RE FLYING VERY VERY VERY HIGH, AREN'T WE, MOMMY?
...AREN'T WE, MOMMY?

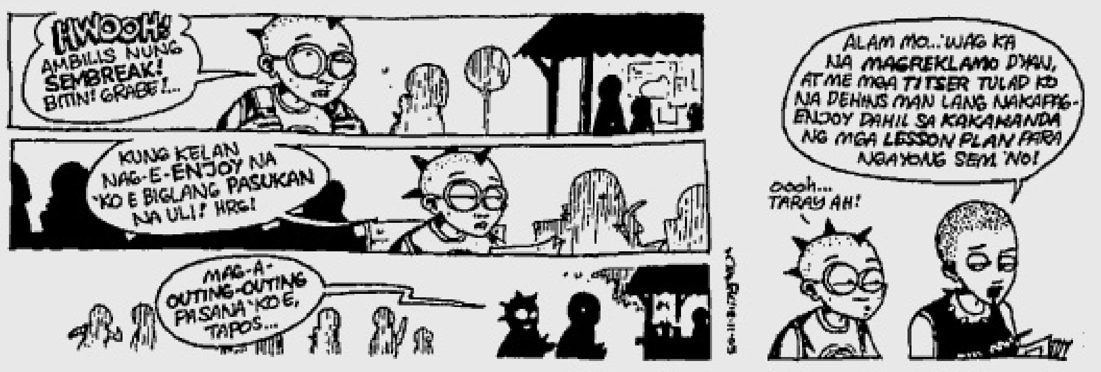
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MARE, NABIGAY DAW SA'YO NG MISTER MO YUNG HILING MONG SALA SET?
A, OO!.
ANG SARAP NGA E, PARANG LANGIT ANG PAKIRAMDAM PAG NAKAUPO KA..
J. Tejido 11.03
www.mikrokosmos.tk
..PERO IMPIYERNO NAMAN KUNG LINISIN!

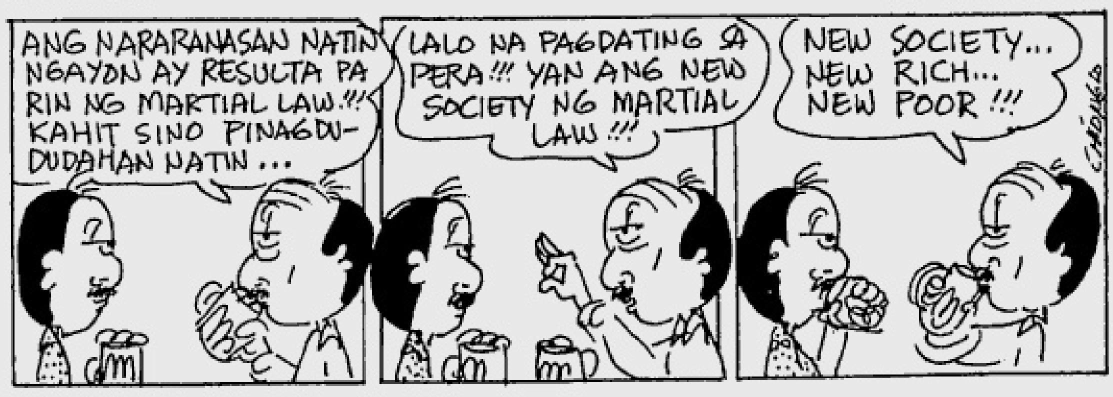
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOOH! AMBILIS NUNG SEMBREAK! BITIN! GRABE!...
KUNG KELAN NAG-E-ENJOY NA 'KO E BIGLANG PASUKAN NA ULI! HRG!
MAG-A-OUTING-OUTING PA SANA 'KO E, TAPOS...
ALAM MO...'WAG KA NA MAGREKLAMO D'YAN, AT ME MGA TITSER TULAD KO NA DEHINS MAN LANG NAKAPAG-ENJOY DAHIL SA KAKAHANDA NG MGA LESSON PLAN PARA NGAYONG SEM 'NO!
oooh... TARAY AH!

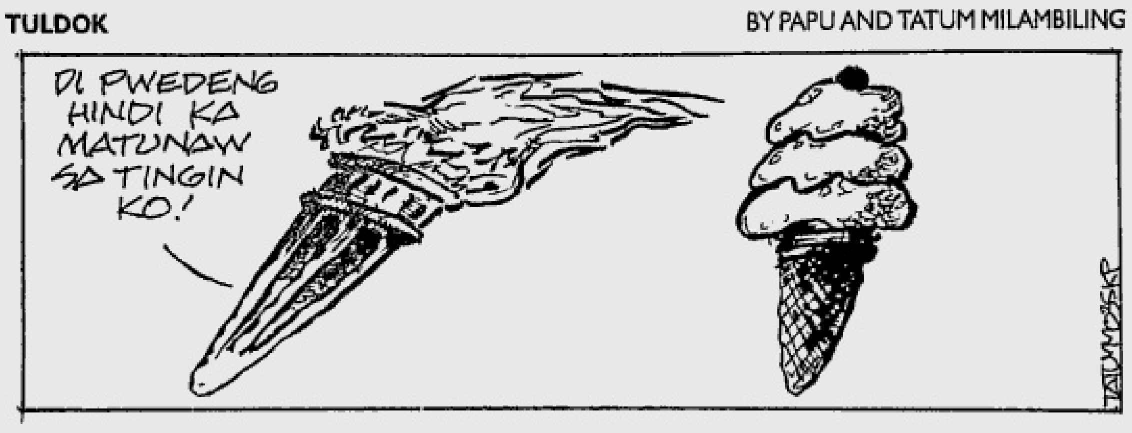
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ANG NARARANASAN NATIN NGAYON AY RESULTA PA RIN NG MARTIAL LAW!!! KAHIT SINO PINAGDUDUDAHAN NATIN...
LALO NA PAGDATING SA PERA!!! YAN ANG NEW SOCIETY NG MARTIAL LAW!!!
NEW SOCIETY... NEW RICH... NEW POOR!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


DI PWEDENG HINDI KA MATUNAW SA TINGIN KO!
TATUM

DID YOU KNOW...

When not busy with his TV shows—"Breakfast" on Studio 23, "Review Nights" on Cinema One, and "Star in a Million" on Channel 2—**Ryan Agoncillo** can be seen driving his Vespa, Ducati or Harley Davidson bike. Often riding with Ryan is his pretty girlfriend who's not from show biz. Ryan has a new show, "Kiss the Cook," which premiered on Studio 23 early this month.

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

MATRIX REVOLUTIONS PG13 12:50, 3:30, 6:10, 8:50	DARK BLUE R18 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00	MATRIX REVOLUTIONS PG13 2:10, 4:50, 7:30, 10:10
MATRIX REVOLUTIONS PG13 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30	WRONG TURN R18 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	MATRIX REVOLUTIONS PG13 2:10, 2:50

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	MY FIRST ROMANCE
Ali 2	LIBERATED
Ali 3	DARK BLUE
Ali 4	MATRIX REVOLUTION
Ali 5	MATRIX REVOLUTION
Ali 6	MAPANUKSO
Ali 7	WRONG TURN

ARANETA COLISEUM

NOV 17	BAKBAKAN 8-STAG DERBY
NOV 19	BAKBAKAN 8-STAG DERBY
NOV 20	MANDY MOORE CONCERT
NOV 21	PBA GAMES
NOV 22	BAKBAKANG 8-STAG DEBY

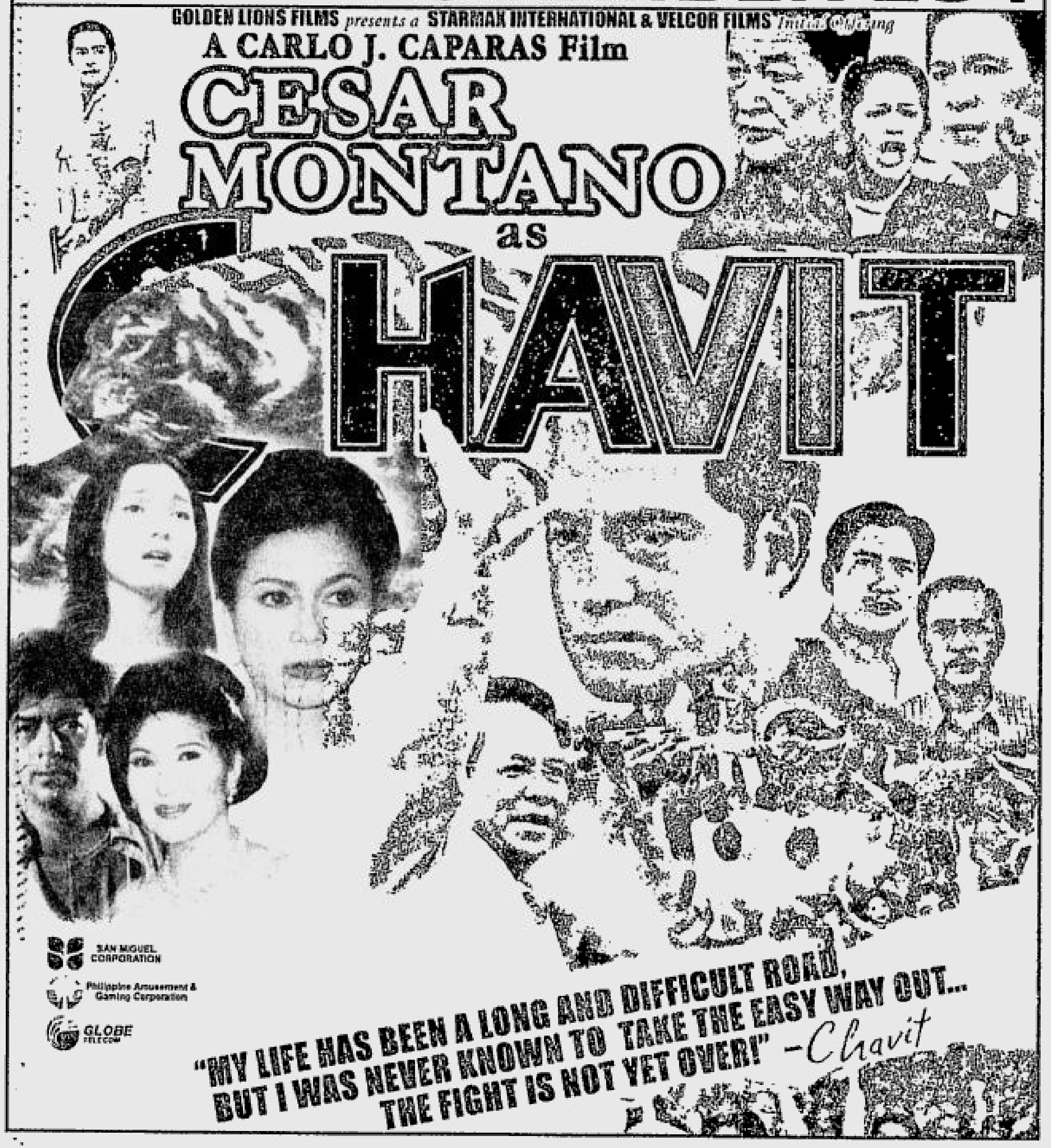
Opens Dec. 23 **DISNEY ON ICE** "Beauty & The Beast"

BUY YOUR TICKETS EARLY TO GET THE BEST SEATS!

Call TicketNet at 911-5555

PREMIERE NIGHT AT 6 SM MEGAMALL CINEMAS ON NOV. 25, 2003 AT 7:30 P.M.

OPENS NOVEMBER 26 !



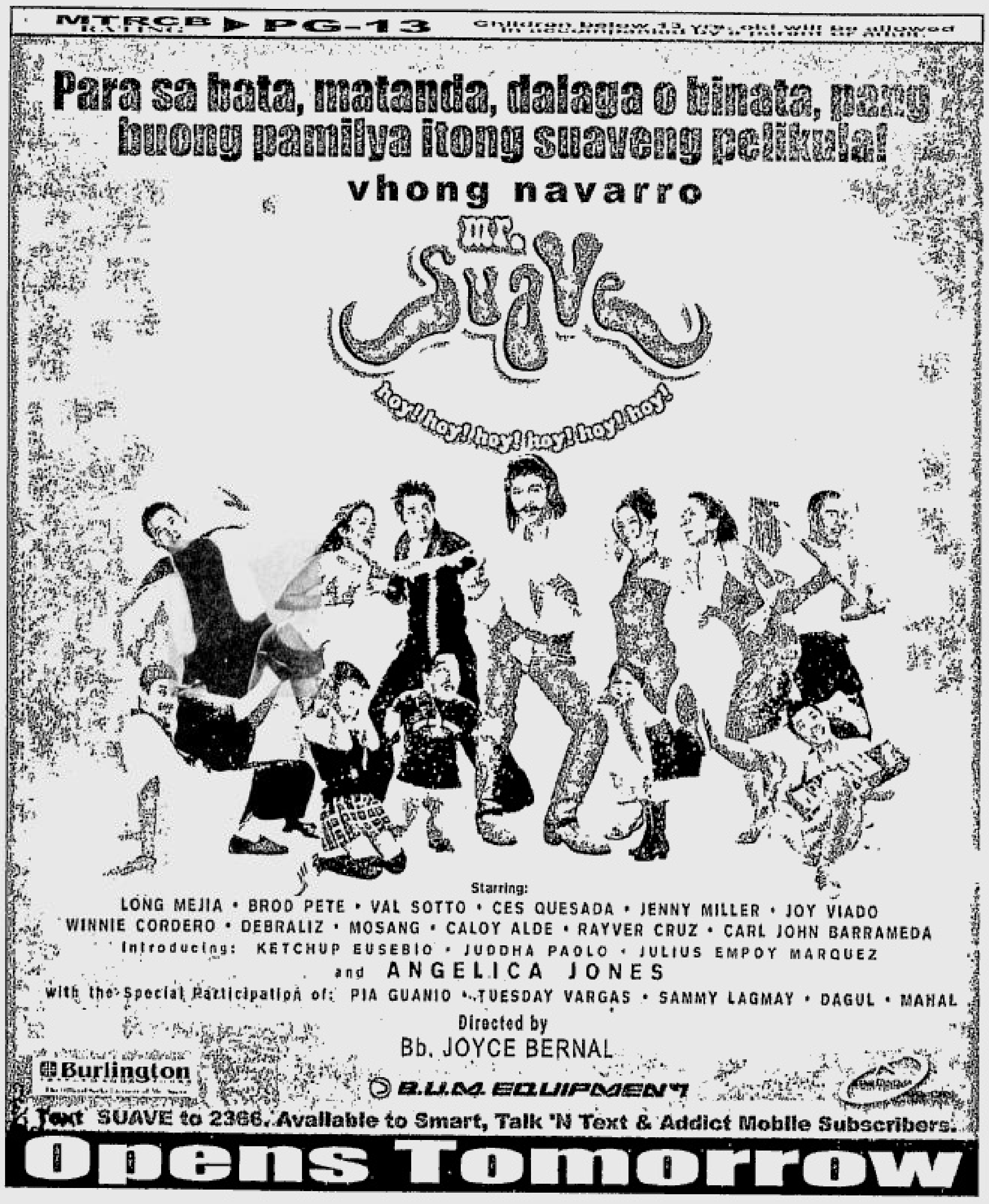
GOLDEN LIONS FILMS presents a STARMAK INTERNATIONAL & VELCOR FILMS Initial Offering

A CARLO J. CAPARAS Film

CESAR MONTANO as CHAVIT

SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION
Philippine Amusement & Gaming Corporation
GLOBE TELECOM

"MY LIFE HAS BEEN A LONG AND DIFFICULT ROAD, BUT I WAS NEVER KNOWN TO TAKE THE EASY WAY OUT... THE FIGHT IS NOT YET OVER!" -Chavit



MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will be allowed [illegible]

Para sa bata, matanda, dalaga o binata, pang buong pamilya itong suaveng pelikula!

vhong navarro

Mr. Suave

hoy! hoy! hoy! hoy! hoy! hoy!

Starring:
LONG MEJIA • BROD PETE • VAL SOTTO • CES QUESADA • JENNY MILLER • JOY VIADO
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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

Fans gate-crash Mariah concert

By Marinel R. Cruz

ABOUT a hundred Mariah Carey die-hard fans last Sunday rushed into the general admission section of the Fort open field in Taguig City, causing a makeshift fence to collapse.

Mariah performed in Manila for the first time as part of her "Charmbracelet Tour 2003."

But no one was reported injured when a makeshift fence collapsed at 9:50 p.m. last Sunday, according to Supt. Cesar Rendon, officer in charge of the Taguig City Police.

The Binondo Co Kim Eh Rescue Foundation, however, reported a case of a concertgoer spraining his ankle during the rush.

Another incident also in the general admission section caused the crowd to react wildly, throwing empty water bottles and soft drink cans onstage, said PO1 Romeo Dimaculang of the Southern Police District.

The general admission gate is only one of the seven entrances to the open field, which can accommodate a crowd of 30,000.

The other entrances were marked as Gold left, Gold right, Silver left, Silver right, Bronze left, Bronze right.

About 250 policemen were deployed for the concert, including 15 Makati City cops who escorted Mariah and her entourage from the Makati Shangri-la Hotel, where they were billeted, to the concert venue.

Rendon said the Taguig Police would conduct a debriefing on the incident this week.

"We will try to study our lapses," he told INQUIRER Entertainment on Sunday. "This is in preparation for the upcoming F4 concert on Nov. 29 here at The Fort."

Taiwanese superstars Jerry Yan and Vic Zhuo of F4 will have a one-night show on Nov. 29 titled "Happy 50 TV."

NO one was injured when a makeshift fence at the Fort open field collapsed during Mariah Carey's first Manila show.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Rendon said Taguig Police would triple the number of security personnel for the F4 show. "We expect twice the number of people who showed up to watch Mariah to watch the F4 show," he said. "We have to prepare for anything."

Many of the estimated 30,000 people who came to watch the pop diva complained of losing their cell phones and of their cars being forcibly opened in the parking area.

Concert usher Jing Pascual said she was disappointed to see policemen standing idle in their stations when she and some of her friends lost their bags after her car was forcibly opened.

FANS/ A23

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
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ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
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TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	MAPANUKSO
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
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A	MAPANUKSO
B	
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
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STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MY FIRST ROMANCE
CINEMA-2	LIBERATED!
CINEMA-3	INNER SENSES
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MATRIX REVOLUTION
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	RUNDOWN
CINEMA-6	SIYA'Y NAGDADALAGA
CINEMA-7	MATRIX REVOLUTION
CINEMA-8	THE PHONE
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	MATRIX REVOLUTION
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MATIRX REVOLUTION
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	DARK BLUE
CINEMA-12	WRONG TURN
CINEMA-14	MAPANUKSO
CINEMA-15	MY FIRST ROMANCE
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	MATRIX REVOLUTION
CINEMA-1	MY FIRST ROMANCE
CINEMA-2	LIBERATED
CINEMA-4	FREAKY FRIDAY
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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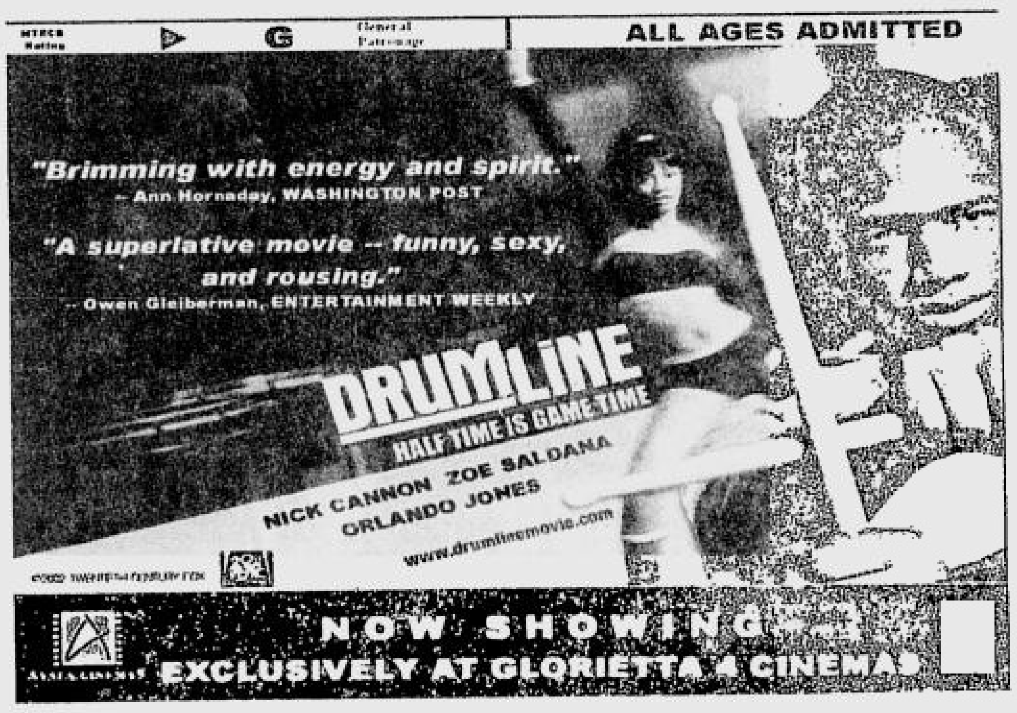
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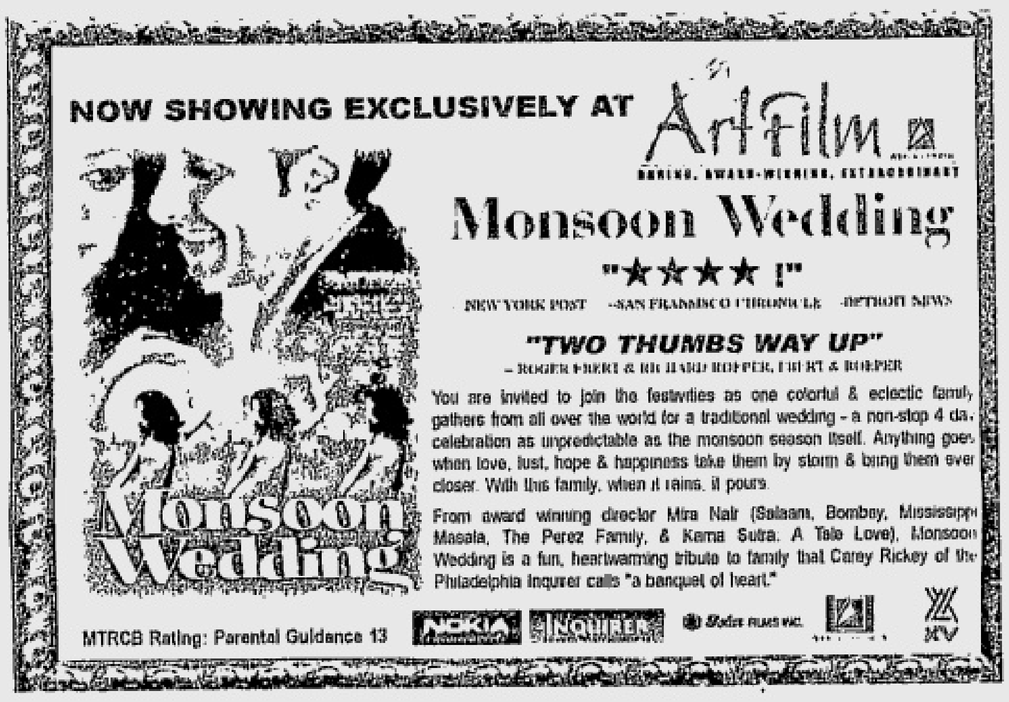
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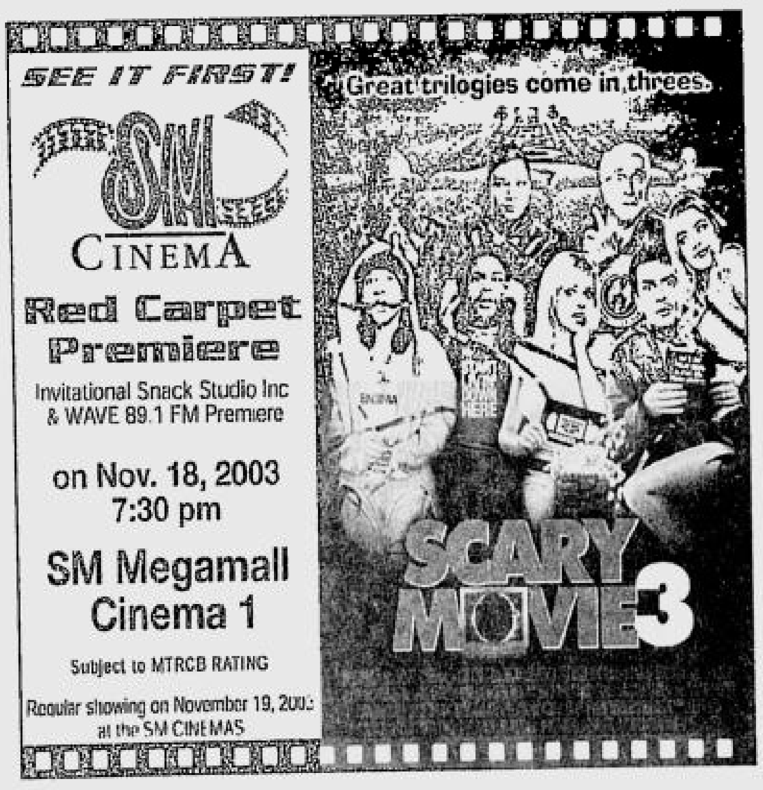
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2 banks urged to seek gov't assistance

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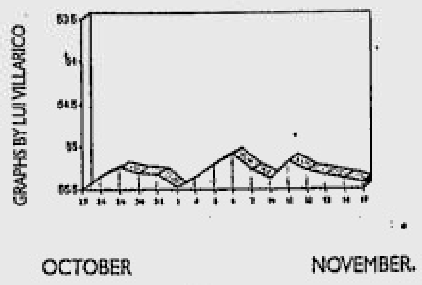

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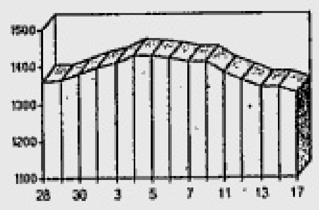
STOCK MARKET

Stocks hit 5-week low

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B3)

STOCKS ended at their lowest mark in five weeks on Monday, driven down by weakness in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) and falling regional markets, traders said.

The market staged a minor rebound last Friday after a seven-day losing streak but traders said the Japanese Nikkei index's fall below a key support and PLDT's slump after its American Depositary Receipts fell in New York, hit the main index.

"PLDT was down sharply on its ADR's, the Hang Seng shed 200 points and the Nikkei fell below 10,000 points for the first time in three months and these all combined to weigh on the local market," said Rommel Macapagal, chair of Westlink Global Securities.

The main composite index finished down 16.87 points, or 1.25 percent, at 1,328.66 points, although it was up 30.46 percent in the year to date.

Turnover slumped to P451.85 million from Friday's P853.99 million.

"We are trying to find some fresh support and we hope to settle around 1,300 to 1,320 points in the near term," said Macapagal, adding a bounce back on Wall Street could aid an upturn in local shares.

PLDT fell 3.3 percent to P735 on the market's highest turnover of P174.5 million after its ADRs slipped 1.3 percent last Friday. Its local stock has fallen nearly 11 percent since touching P825 on Nov. 4, its highest closing mark since February 2001.

Rival Globe Telecom also slid as profit-takers continued to cash out of the stock after it hit P840 on Nov. 4, it's highest finish since November 1994.

"Technically it became overbought at P840. I think some investors who bought in at P740 to P750 are still cashing out," said Ron Rodrigo, a research analyst at Accord Capital Equities.

Traders said the market might also have been adjusting the price downward after Globe's key stockholders, Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecommunications Ltd, sold last week 7.5 million shares out of a block purchased from Deutsche Telekom for P765 each. *Reuters*

By Clarissa S. Batino and Elena R. Torrijos

WHILE assuring the public that they remained financially sound, two mid-sized banks have been advised to seek funding assistance from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the state-owned Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. due to their increasing amounts of soured loans.

Philippine Bank of Communication and Prudential Bank have been weighed down by heavy bad loans. As of the third quarter, PBCom's non-performing loans stood at P6.37 billion or 28.26 percent of total loans while Prudential Bank's NPL ratio was at a higher 38.26 percent of total loans.

Well-placed sources said 16th largest PBCom had sought a P10-billion assistance from the BSP and the PDIC while 17th biggest Prudential Bank had been urged by regulators to avail itself of about P3 billion in standby credit from the BSP.

The BSP assured the public that both banks remained financially sound and were not suffering from any liquidity problems.

Prudential vice president Horatio Santos also denied yesterday that the family-owned bank sought financial assistance from the BSP.

"We asked for a longer period to stagger loan-loss (provisioning) just like other banks. In the course of the discussion, the BSP asked us to apply for a standby line just in case we need it. But we asked them, what for. Even at the height of our problems related to the Tibayan Group, we never asked for BSP assistance, which even at that time they were offering," Santos said:

The Tibayan Group had previous links with the "pyramiding" firm Mateo Management Group, a company that had been shut down by the Securities and Exchange Commission. The Tibayan Group used to own about 10 percent of Prudential Bank but was reduced to only about 4 percent after the Santos family bought more than half of its stake.

At the same time, PBCom president Isidro Alcantara said that major shareholders of PBCom were willing to put in P3 billion into the bank "for future growth," denying that the bank would seek financial assistance from PDIC and the BSP on the sale of bad assets.

But in a separate interview, a bank director and family member of one of the major shareholders confirmed that there was indeed such a plan.

PDIC president Ricardo Tan was less categorical, saying that no discussions had yet been made on PBCom's reported plan to sell real estate and non-performing loans to the state-owned government financial institution.

"(There's) nothing yet with us at all on this. We have not even begun to sit down," Tan said.

PDIC and BSP, however, have already completed their examination of the bank and come up with projections about the plan, the PBCom director said.

The INQUIRER reported Monday that PBCom was scheduled to meet this week with PDIC and BSP on the bank's proposal to give up real estate assets and non-performing loans in favor of the banking regulators in exchange for an equivalent cash of P7 billion and the infusion by the shareholders of P3 billion into the bank in fresh money.

In the interview with Inquirer yesterday, the PBCom director explained that the bank wanted to sell its non-performing assets to the PDIC/BSP combine with a clause to buy back the assets after 10 years because the bank would be able to get a far better deal, basically, a peso in cash for every peso of asset, than if the assets were sold to the likes of US-based investment firm Lehman Brothers, which has been offering only 10 to 20 centavos for every peso of non-performing assets.

"We just don't feel good getting rid of assets at a fire sale," the director said.

While waiting word from regulators on its request, the sources said that PBCom was attracting in-

2 BANKS/ B2

Survey says Filipinos benefit from globalization

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

GLOBALIZATION might have forced a number local manufacturing concerns to close shop and left thousands of workers jobless, but most Filipinos still believe that rising trade between countries have been largely beneficial to their lives.

A Social Weather Station 2003 globalization poll showed that two out of every three Filipinos or 67 percent of respondents said that globalization has had very or somewhat positive effects on them and on their families and only 20 percent said it had a somewhat or very negative effect.

The overwhelmingly positive response on globalization—which SWS defined as "increased trade between countries in goods, services, and investment,"—was evident in all classes (A, B, C, D and E) and all regions (Metro Manila, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao) based on the survey conducted on 1,200 representative households from May 28 to June 14 this year.

The SWS survey results contrasted sharply with the rising clamor from local manufacturers, farmers and labor unions to stop opening the country's markets to imports and to raise tariff barriers anew to protect factories, farms and jobs. The recent World Trade Organization meeting in Cancun, Mexico, ended in a stalemate as developing countries refused to agree to further trade liberalization commitments if the developed countries do not fulfill their old promises, specifically cutting down subsidies.

The SWS noted that the results of its globalization poll reflected the results of the world's largest survey on globalization conducted by Environics International Ltd. for the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2001 where people in 19 out of 25 nationalities said that increased trade had been beneficial to their lives.

The SWS survey said that most of the respondents expect globalization to improve access of Philippine exports to world markets; family's quality of life; family income and buying power; the Philippine economy; economic development in poor countries; cultural life; availability of inexpensive products; human rights, individual freedom and democracy in the world; world peace and stability; the quality of jobs; workers' rights, working conditions and wages; the number of jobs; economic equality among nations, and environmental quality in the world.

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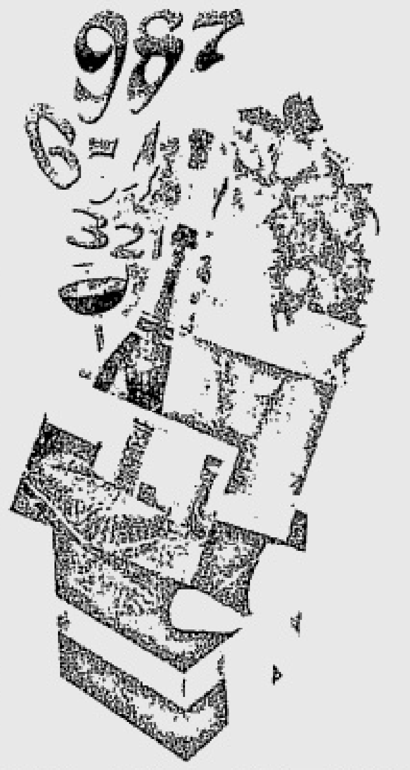

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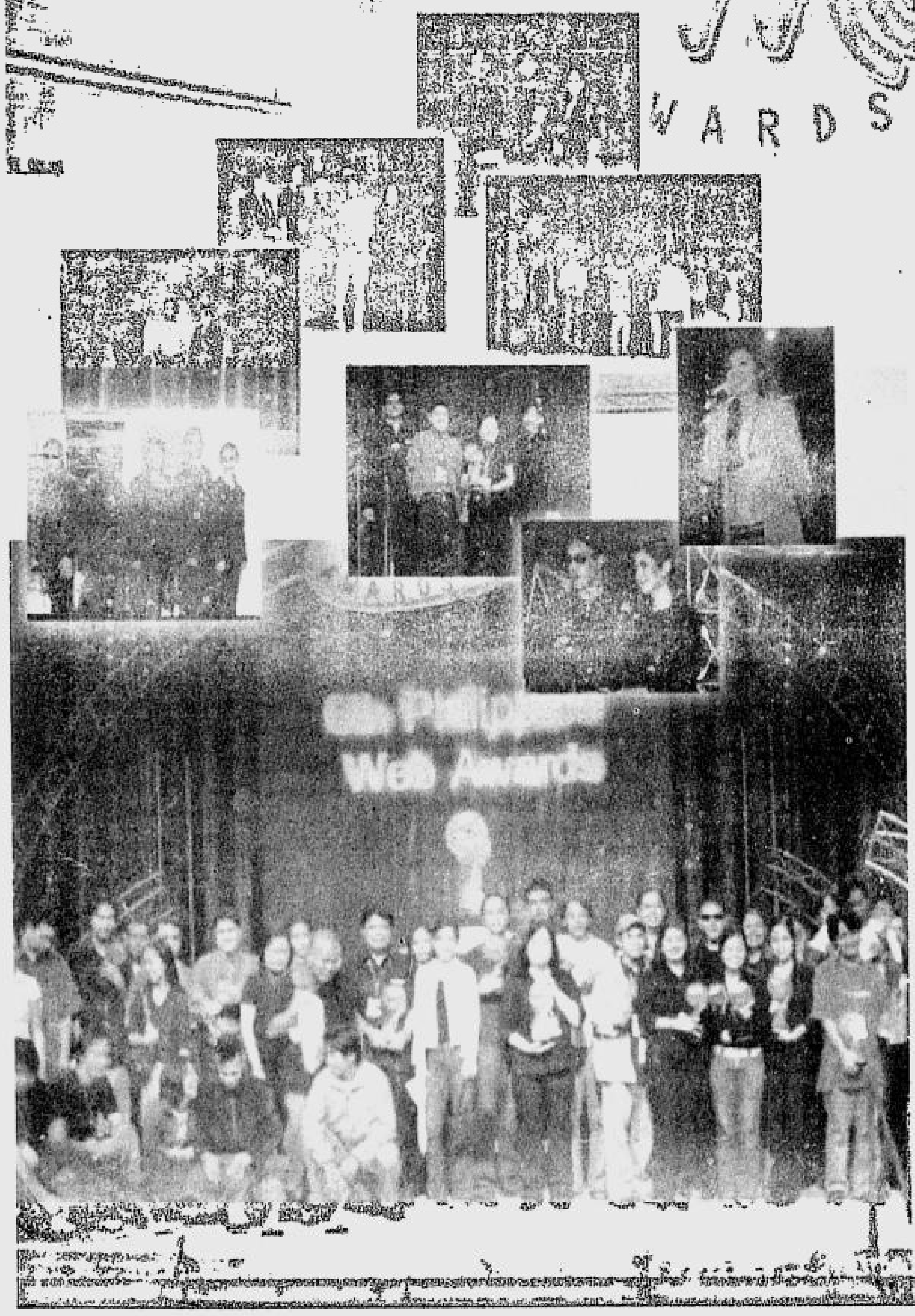

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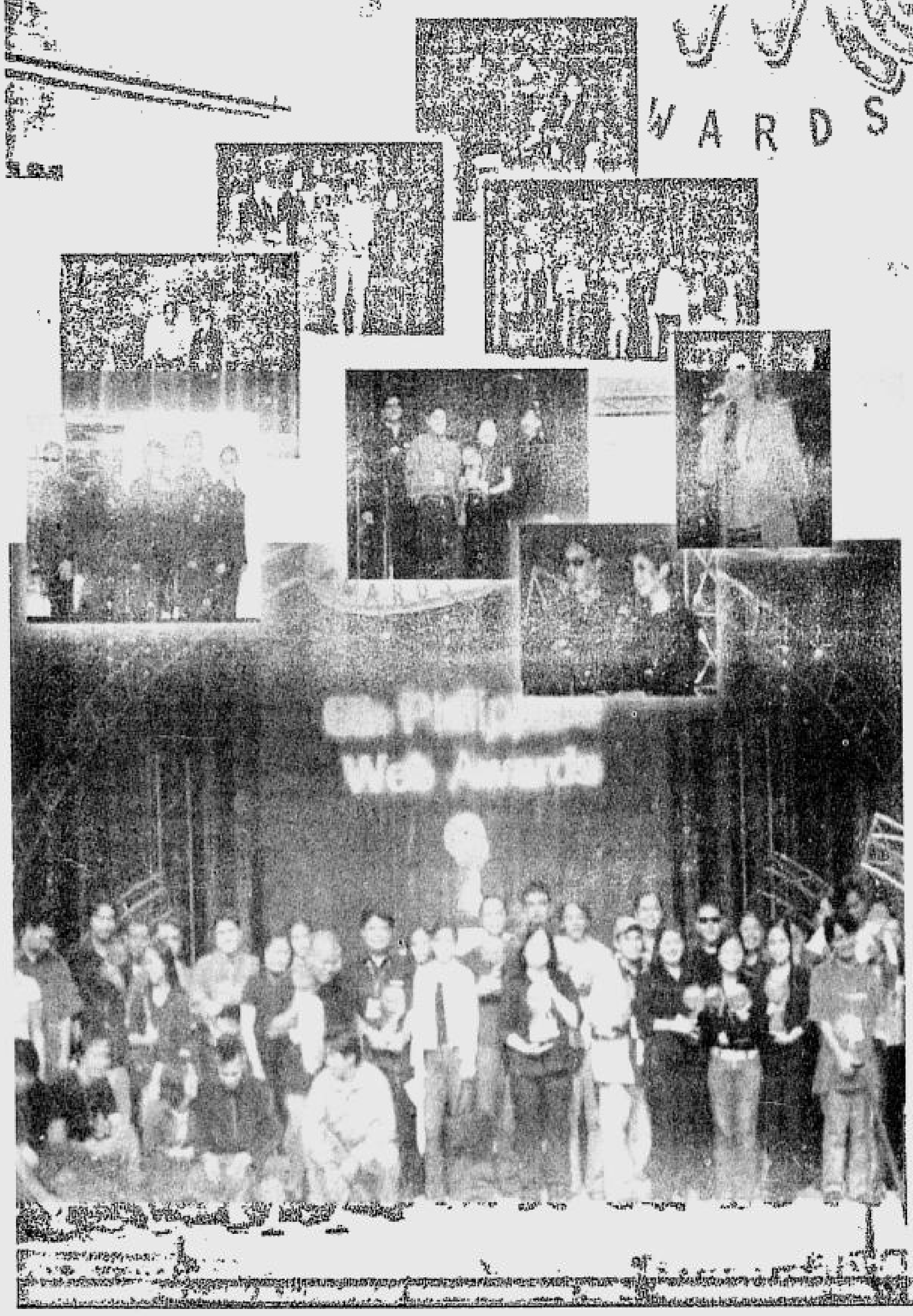

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Bank of the Phil. Islands	43	43	42.5	42.5	128,600
Citystate Savings Bank	15	15	15	15	2,500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	34	34	34	34	15,600
First E-Bank Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25.5	26.5	25.5	26	237,300
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	1650	1655	1650	1655	1,840
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	465,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1340	1345	1340	1345	2,120
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	4,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.66	0.67	700,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	800	800	770	775	53,290
Ipeople Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	30,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.041	0.042	0.04	0.041	5,900,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	31,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.85	0.85	1,620,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	760	760	720	735	236,510
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	3,400,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	13	13.5	13	13.5	206,600
Manila Electric Co. B	19.75	19.75	19.5	19.75	695,000
Petron Corp.	2.02	2.06	2.02	2.04	2,704,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	20,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	990,000
William,Gothong & Aboitiz	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	11,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	50,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.02	1.1	1.02	1.1	3,309,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	10,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17	17	16.75	17	344,700
RFM Corp.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	30,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54	54.5	54	54.5	9,000
San Miguel Corp. B	61	61	59.5	60	116,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	20,000
Ayala Corp.	5	5	4.95	5	11,368,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	68,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	400,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	3,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.48	0.49	0.45	0.47	7,860,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.205	0.205	600,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.055	0.055	0.05	0.05	1,900,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	20,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	17.5	17.75	17.25	17.5	1,189,300
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	20,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.075	0.0775	0.075	0.075	1,700,000
Ionics Inc.	1.5	1.52	1.5	1.5	535,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	4,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.02	1.02	801,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.28	2,730,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.155	0.16	0.155	0.16	120,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	300,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	200,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	60,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	100,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	600,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	170,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	2,350,000
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.2	130,000
Manila Jockey Club	12	12	12	12	6,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.175	0.175	150,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.25	0.25	390,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	25.5	26	25.5	26	1,606,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	1,300
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6	6	5.9	5.9	2,140,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	22,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	1,000,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.23	0.23	1,240,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.06	812,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	500,000
SM Development Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	53,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.4	3,618,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.24	0.24	0.225	0.225	13,730,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.33	0.33	0.3	0.3	7,980,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.0075	25,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.008	83,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	9,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	2,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	70,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	120,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	6,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000

A good sell of telephone

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

JAPANESE Prime Minister Koizumi was reelected with a reduced majority but claims that he still has a mandate. Now, all he needs is a woman date.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is considering allowing Erap to go to the US for an operation. This is not surprising because she pledged to help the kneedy.

I discovered a new source of amusing true stories that will lessen the need for me to think up new puns and jokes every week. Bloomberg publishes funny, up-to-date, true stories daily and here are a few of them:

In Chile, a radio station has set off a scandal by offering 1 hour of free sex with a prostitute as a prize in a raffle. In less than 10 minutes, the station received 70 calls and a lucky 23-year old man was declared the winner. In spite of concern by the Association of Radio Broadcasters of Chile, it will be repeated this week, but with a male prostitute. ABS please take note.

In Los Angeles, 4 women sued a restaurant after one of the women gagged on a condom that had found its way into her bowl of clam chowder. Initially, she thought it was a particularly tough clam, but when she spat it out, it was an unwrapped, rolled-up condom. She is now seeing a psychiatrist for depression and anxiety. The trial is scheduled for Jan. 12. I hope she didn't catch clamydia.

A bag-snatcher in Johannesburg dashed off with a woman's purse and ran into three armed thugs who promptly bashed him over the head with a pistol and took the loot. The bag-snatcher and two armed men were arrested. Hold my bag, Dad.

Descendants of a Fijian tribe that cooked and ate a British missionary 136 years ago are to hold a formal ceremony apologizing to his relatives. Thomas Baker, a Wesleyan Methodist, was hacked to death with a battle-axe and was dismembered, cooked and eaten, along with his clothes, except for his boots, which were too tough. The curled leather soles are on display in Fiji's national museum. Years of bad luck followed and the Prime Minister was among 2,000 Christians who hope the ceremony will remove the curse. Now they eat rice.

A London company has gone to the government to complain about the age and size of a stripper they booked for a party. On the Internet, they ordered a slim and attractive girl for the manager's 40th birthday party. Instead, they got a middle-aged woman weighing 250 pounds. She ended her 20-minute show by baring her breasts and spanking the manager. "It has put me off women for life. I keep getting flashbacks," he said. Lawyers have filed a case of misrepresentation under the Supply of Goods and Services Act, 1982.

***

READERS, who followed my advice and sold TEL first thing on Tuesday, got P840 for their shares, the highest level to date. Yesterday, they could have bought them back at P720, a quick profit of P120, minus expenses. The degree of risk last Tuesday was very high (94) but now it had dropped to 13. It can still go lower but it is in the BUY zone with fragile support at P720. Foreign brokers, who had been buying the shares for the past 6 months have turned sellers, not because of the results, which exceeded all analysts' expectations, but because they want to take profits in a country that appears politically unstable.

The attempted impeachment of the Chief Justice and the shoot-out at the Naia airport were the last straws. Added to that were 3 rallies in Makati, the last of which ended with the police using tear gas on shabbily dressed men and women carrying young babies. Of course, we who live in the Philippines know that it was a put up job, with the people taking part being paid to do so. Foreign viewers do not know this, so it appears to them that the police were using unnecessary force. The shootout in the control tower tended to confirm this, and over the next 6 months, we can expect destabilizing incidents to occur more frequently.

From April to October, foreign brokers were net buyers of around P5 billion worth of blue chips, especially TEL and GLO. They turned sellers last Tuesday, and have been unloading TEL, GLO, SMPH, AC, ALI, TEL, FPH, and MERB. They averaged P60 million a day but on Thursday, they sold twice as much and over the past week, they were net sellers of P318 million. This sounds a lot, and in our small market, it is enough to send the Phisix down 20 points a day, but compared to what they bought, it is only a small amount. If they keep on selling, they could send the index much lower so it is imperative for the government to take steps to prevent further rallies occurring in the most sensitive areas and tighten up on security. It is incredible that two men could walk into the Naia control tower carrying guns and explosives.

Everything is a matter of perception, and the opponents of GMA are not only trying to destroy her, they are destroying the country as well. Investment in new factories has fallen from $750 million in 1997 to a low of $250 million for 2003. Our tourism industry is doing badly compared to Thailand, and we have the weakest currency in Asia. It is still near its high of 55.50 even though the dollar has depreciated against a basket of currencies to its lowest level since 1997. Without the $5.66 billion sent home by OFWs in the first 9 months of this year, I shudder to think what the rate might be. The baht and the peso have for a decade been within a point of each other. Now the baht is just under 40, reflecting its booming stock market, which is up 80 percent in dollar terms; the difference is now 15 points.

A secondary reason for the market fall was the fact that it was the end of the dividend season. I wrote last week that the market goes up ahead of dividend announcements and down afterwards, even if they are exceptional, as in the case of TEL and GLOBE. If they are on target but not exciting, like ALI and AC, the shares are sold down, and if they are slightly disappointing like SMPH, the result is carnage. I told subscribers to sell SMPH at P7.50 because the risk factor was 100. After the figures, the shares dropped to P6.30 in just a few days.

If you think my comment that the market would go lower was well timed, I hate to disillusion you, but I told subscribers to SELL 6 days earlier. They received a SELL signal on the market the previous Wednesday when the Phisix was at its high, with a risk factor of 97. By yesterday, the market had fallen 7 days out of 8 and the risk factor is now down to single digits. So far, the change in momentum has pinpointed the last 7 tops and bottoms spot on, but it is based on mathematical probabilities, which cannot take into account unforeseeable events.

As it happens, all the bad events have taken place early in the down cycles, and therefore, the downtrends have been reinforced. So I have been lucky, but any method that improves the odds has got to be worth following. That is how Las Vegas became so wealthy, because the casinos had a mathematical edge.

mrbearbull@hotmail.com

Globe Telecom eyes bigger dividend payout in 2004

By Abigail L. Ho

AYALA-LED Globe Telecom Inc. is looking at making a dividend payout of more than 30 percent of its 2003 net income to its stockholders next year.

Globe president Gerardo Ablaza Jr. said in a recent interview that while the exact amount was still being discussed by the company's finance committee, the level of dividends declared last year would likely be just the "floor" for next year's declaration.

The company's board of directors approved last April the declaration of a P14-per-share cash dividend to all common stockholders as of April 21. Payment of the dividends was made on May 6.

This represented 30 percent of Globe's 2002 net income and was the first dividend declaration in 10 years, Ablaza said.

"We would like to see if we have some room to improve on that. In the final analysis, it would be the decision of the board balancing the needs of the company as well as the needs of the shareholders," he said.

Globe last year posted a net income of P6.8 billion, up 59 percent from P4.3 billion the year before.

DISCLOSURES

MANILA Jockey Club Inc. will hold its special stockholders' meeting on Dec. 5, 9 a.m. at the Amethyst Room of Manila Diamond Hotel. Only stockholders of record as of Nov. 5 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

***

MATSUSHITA Electric Philippines Corp. declared a cash dividend of P0.20 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of Dec. 2 and will be payable on Dec. 18.

***

ELECTED directors of **AGP Industrial Corp.** were Rosario Bernaldo, Donato Faylona, Manuel Singson, Angelito Bernardino, Allan Gepty and Mario Ng.

***

BENPRES Holdings Corp. disclosed that Maynilad Water Services Inc. filed a petition for corporate rehabilitation before the Regional Trial Court of Quezon City.

***

INTERPHIL Laboratories Inc. bought 1,000 of its own shares at P1.90 per share.

***

EIB Realty Developers Inc. disclosed it did not hold an annual stockholders' meeting last Nov. 14 as previously disclosed.

***

SECURITY Bank Corp. said it received verbal confirmation that the Monetary Board approved its request for issuance of lower tier 2 fixed rate subordinated notes with principal amount of up to P3 billion. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

November 17, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.848896435	1.000000	55.325000
Japan	Yen	0.007838	0.009233	0.510800
United Kingdom	Pound	1.433022	1.688100	93.394100
Hongkong	Dollar	0.109492	0.128982	7.135900
Switzerland	Franc	0.639518	0.753352	41.679200
Canada	Dollar	0.651744	0.767754	42.476000
Singapore	Dollar	0.493774	0.581666	32.180700
Australia	Dollar	0.609664	0.718184	39.733500
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.251834	2.652661	146.758500
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.226379	0.266674	14.753700
Brunei	Dollar	0.492342	0.579979	32.087300
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.0001	0.000118	0.006500
Thailand	Baht	0.021302	0.025094	1.388300
UAE	Dirham	0.231143	0.272287	15.064300
Euro	Euro	1	1.178000	65.172900
ArgentinaPeso	0.295783	0.348432	19.277000	
Brazil	REAL	0.288642	0.340020	18.811600
Denmark	Kroner	0.134398	0.158321	8.759100
India	Rupee	0.018735	0.022070	1.221000
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.223424	0.263193	14.561200
Mexico	New Peso	0.076223	0.089791	4.967700
New Zealand	Dollar	0.534469	0.629604	34.832800
Norway	Kroner	0.121796	0.143476	7.937800
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014825	0.017464	0.966200
South Africa	Rand	0.126795	0.149365	8.263600
Korea	Won	0.000725	0.000854	0.047200
Sweden	Kroner	0.111655	0.131530	7.276900
Syria	Pound	0.020212	0.023810	1.317300
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025034	0.029490	1.631500
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000532	0.000627	0.034700

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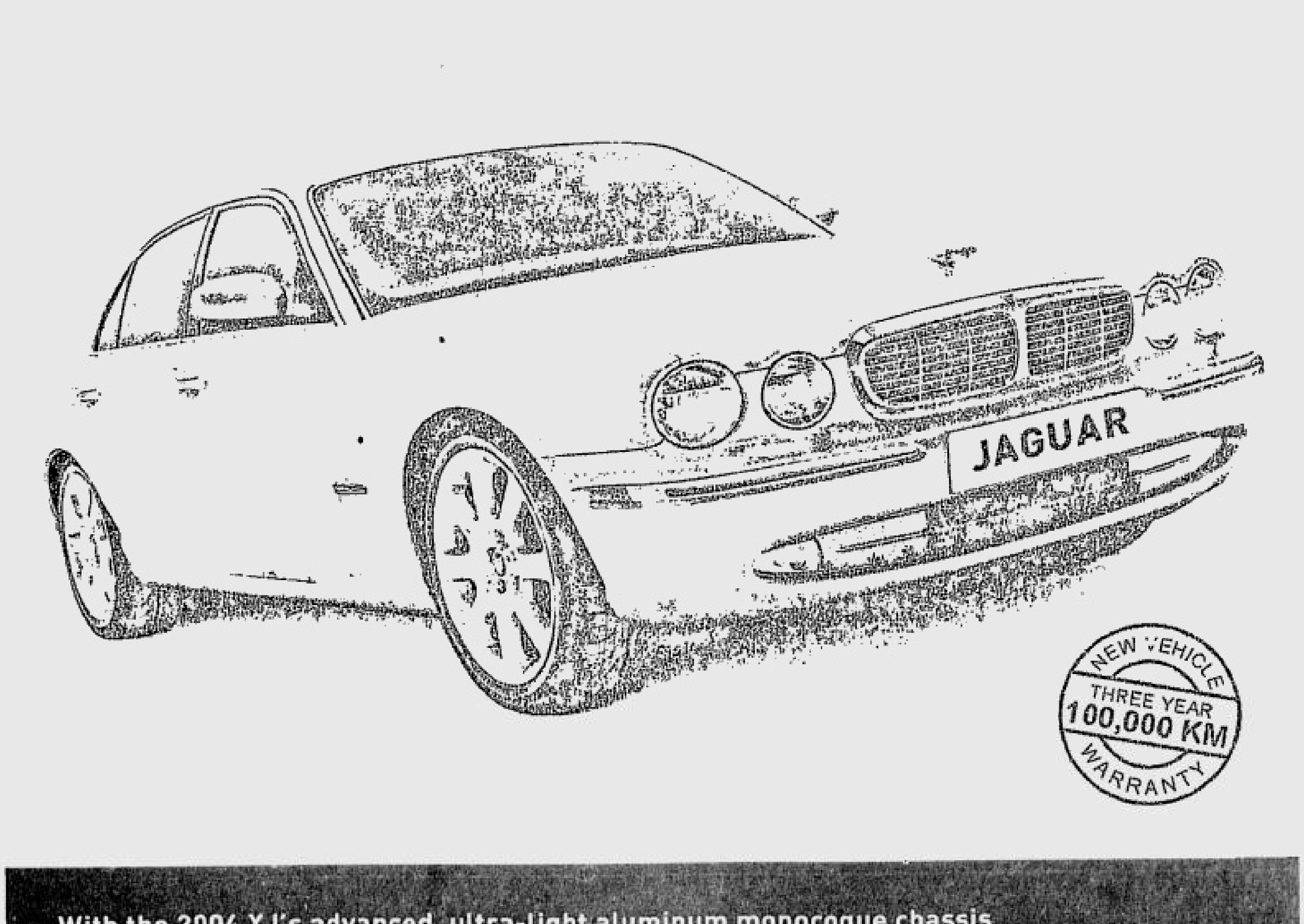

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8 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

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3 UNDERWORLD
4 THE RUNDOWN
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7 MY FIRST ROMANCE
8 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

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6 CLOSED
7 LIBERATED
8 WRONG TURN

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1 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
2 IDENTITY
3 UPTOWN GIRLS
4 LIBERATED
5 DARK BLUE
6 MY FIRST ROMANCE

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
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1 DARK BLUE
2 WRONG TURN
3 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
4 LIBERATED

SM BICUTAN
7763055

1 DARK BLUE
2 LIBERATED
3 MY FIRST ROMANCE
4 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

SM CITY MARILAO

OPENS
Nov. 28

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2 THE RUNDOWN
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4 LIBERATED
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6 THE PHONE
7 DARK BLUE
8 MAPANUKSO
9 WRONG TURN
10 MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER

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10 MY FIRST ROMANCE

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4 DARK BLUE
5 WRONG TURN
6 IDENTITY
7 THE WISHER
8 MY FIRST ROMANCE
9 LIBERATED
10 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
11 THE PHONE
12 MAPANUKSO

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1 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
2 MAPANUKSO
3 LIBERATED
4 MY FIRST ROMANCE

SM CITY ILOILO
3209402

1 MAPUPULANG LABI
2 RESERVED
3 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
4 MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER
5 MY FIRST ROMANCE
6 FREAKY FRIDAY
7 RESERVED
8 INNER SENSES

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 WRONG TURN
2 THE PHONE
3 THE RUNDOWN
4 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
5 DARK BLUE
6 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
7 MAPANUKSO
8 IDENTITY
9 MY FIRST ROMANCE
10 THE WISHER
11 MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER
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2 MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER
3 FREAKY FRIDAY
4 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

SM CITY BAGUIO
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Nov. 21

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THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
11:30 FS/12:00 MF/2:45/5:30/8:15/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:15 END

DARK BLUE
11:00 FS/11:20 MF/1:40/4:00/6:20/8:40/10:40 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:00 END

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2 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00	5 DARK BLUE 10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:55
3 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS 10:20, 1:00, 3:40, 6:20, 9:00	6 IDENTITY 11:25, 1:30, 3:35, 5:40, 7:45, 9:50
7 MY FIRST ROMANCE 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50	9 WISHER 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
8 LIBERATED 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00	10 THE RUNDOWN 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50

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2 THE PHONE - 11:05, 12:55, 2:45, 4:35, 6:25, 8:15, 10:00
3 LIBERATED - 10:10, 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:40
4 DARK BLUE - 11:15, 1:25, 3:35, 5:45, 7:55, 10:00
5 WISHER - 11:05, 12:55, 2:45, 4:35, 6:25, 8:15, 10:00
6 WRONG TURN - 10:40, 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 6:40, 8:30, 10:00
7 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS - 10:15, 1:00, 3:50, 6:40, 9:30

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2 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
3 THE PHONE
4 WRONG TURN
5 DARK BLUE
6 INNER SENSES
7 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
8 LIBERATED

Novaliches

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1 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
2 UPTOWN GIRLS
3 THE PHONE
4 TEMPTING HEART
5 MY FIRST ROMANCE
6 WRONG TURN
7 DARK BLUE
8 LIBERATED

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LIBERATED	2	WRONG TURN
UPTOWN GIRL	3	LIBERATED
THE SUSPECT	4	DARK BLUE
DARK BLUE	5	MY FIRST ROMANCE
MATRIX REVOLUTIONS	6	MAPANUKSO

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MY FIRST ROMANCE	2	FREAKY FRIDAY
THE SUSPECT	3	INNER SENSES
FREAKY FRIDAY	4	UNDERWORLD
MATCHSTICK MEN	5	MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER
	6	MAPUPULANG LABI

Sta. Rosa (049)837-0907		Lipa, Batangas [illegible]
MATRIX REVOLUTIONS	1	MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
THE PHONE	2	IDENTITY
MAPUPULANG LABI	3	UPTOWN GIRLS
IDENTITY	4	MY FIRST ROMANCE
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3 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
4 WRONG TURN

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1	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
2	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
3	UNDERWORLD
4	THE RUNDOWN
5	UPTOWN GIRLS
6	FREAKY FRIDAY
7	MY FIRST ROMANCE
8	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

SM CITY BACOOR
4173660

1	MY FIRST ROMANCE
2	MAPANUKSO
3	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
4	DARK BLUE
5	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
6	CLOSED
7	LIBERATED
8	WRONG TURN

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
2	IDENTITY
3	UPTOWN GIRLS
4	LIBERATED
5	DARK BLUE
6	MY FIRST ROMANCE

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1	DARK BLUE
2	WRONG TURN
3	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
4	LIBERATED

SM BICUTAN
7763065

1	DARK BLUE
2	LIBERATED
3	MY FIRST ROMANCE
4	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

SM CITY MARILAO

OPENS
Nov. 28

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1	MY FIRST ROMANCE
2	THE RUNDOWN
3	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
4	LIBERATED
5	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
6	THE PHONE
7	DARK BLUE
8	MAPANUKSO
9	WRONG TURN
10	MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER

SM SOUTHMALL
8065089

1	THE WISHER
2	DARK BLUE
3	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
4	WRONG TURN
5	THE RUNDOWN
6	MAPANUKSO
7	LIBERATED
8	THE PHONE
9	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
10	MY FIRST ROMANCE

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	LIBERATED
2	THE PHONE
3	THE RUNDOWN
4	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
5	WRONG TURN
6	MY FIRST ROMANCE
7	UPTOWN GIRLS
8	DARK BLUE
9	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
10	AMERICAN PSYCHO 2
11	DOUBLE SEDUCTION
12	SEX & ZEN 2

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
2	MY FIRST ROMANCE
3	UPTOWN GIRLS
4	FREDDY VS. JASON
5	FREAKY FRIDAY
6	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

SM CITY LUCENA
(042) 7100377-80

1	THE RUNDOWN
2	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
3	MY FIRST ROMANCE
4	THE SUSPECT

SM MEGAMALL
6331001 • 6329401

1	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS RESERVE-A-SEAT dial 6336000
2	THE RUNDOWN
3	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
4	DARK BLUE
5	WRONG TURN
6	IDENTITY
7	THE WISHER
8	MY FIRST ROMANCE
9	LIBERATED
10	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
11	THE PHONE
12	MAPANUKSO

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
2	MAPANUKSO
3	LIBERATED
4	MY FIRST ROMANCE

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	MAPUPULANG LABI
2	RESERVED
3	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
4	MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER
5	MY FIRST ROMANCE
6	FREAKY FRIDAY
7	RESERVED
8	INNER SENSES

SM CITY MANILA
5239249

1	WRONG TURN
2	THE PHONE
3	THE RUNDOWN
4	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
5	DARK BLUE
6	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
7	MAPANUKSO
8	IDENTITY
9	MY FIRST ROMANCE
10	THE WISHER
11	MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER
12	LIBERATED

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
(088) 8593084

1	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
2	MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER
3	FREAKY FRIDAY
4	THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

SM CITY BAGUIO
(074) 4464505

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Nov. 21

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THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
11:30 FS/12:00 MF/2:45/5:30/8:15/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:15 END

DARK BLUE
11:00 FS/11:20 MF/1:40/4:00/6:20/8:40/10:40 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:00 END

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1 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30 THX

4 WRONG TURN 10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:55

2 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00

5 DARK BLUE 10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:55

3 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS 10:20, 1:00, 3:40, 6:20, 9:00

6 IDENTITY 11:25, 1:30, 3:35, 5:40, 7:45, 9:50

7 MY FIRST ROMANCE 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50

9 WISHER 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00

8 LIBERATED 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

10 THE RUNDOWN 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50

MATINEE PRICE: P100 THX cinema / P75 5level cinemas
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Ermita
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536-7809 to 12

1 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS - 11:10, 2:00, 4:50, 7:40, 10:00
2 THE PHONE - 11:05, 12:55, 2:45, 4:35, 6:25, 8:15, 10:00
3 LIBERATED - 10:10, 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:40
4 DARK BLUE - 11:15, 1:25, 3:35, 5:45, 7:55, 10:30
5 WISHER - 11:05, 12:55, 2:45, 4:25, 5:25, 8:15, 10:00
6 WRONG TURN - 10:40, 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 6:40, 8:30, 10:00
7 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS - 10:15, 1:00, 3:50, 6:40, 9:30

Metro East
Marcos hway
682-8193/99
682-8280

1	MY FIRST ROMANCE
2	MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
3	THE PHONE
4	WRONG TURN
5	DARK BLUE
6	INNER SENSES
7	MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
8	LIBERATED

Novaliches
935-3229 / 31

1	MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
2	UPTOWN GIRLS
3	THE PHONE
4	TEMPTING HEART
5	MY FIRST ROMANCE
6	WRONG TURN
7	DARK BLUE
8	LIBERATED

Star Mills (045)875-1927 (045)961-5270		Imus (046)471-0108 / 875-5950
IDENTITY	1	MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
LIBERATED	2	WRONG TURN
UPTOWN GIRL	3	LIBERATED
THE SUSPECT	4	DARK BLUE
DARK BLUE	5	MY FIRST ROMANCE
MATRIX REVOLUTIONS	6	MAPANUKSO

Bacolod (034)441-0458/59		Iloilo (033)336-8070 to 78
MATRIX REVOLUTIONS	1	MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
MY FIRST ROMANCE	2	FREAKY FRIDAY
THE SUSPECT	3	INNER SENSES
FREAKY FRIDAY	4	UNDERWORLD
MATCHSTICK MEN	5	MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER
	6	MAPUPULANG LABI

Sta. Rosa (049)837-0007		Lipa, Batangas
MATRIX REVOLUTIONS	1	MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
THE PHONE	2	IDENTITY
MAPUPULANG LABI	3	UPTOWN GIRLS
IDENTITY	4	MY FIRST ROMANCE
UNDERWORLD	5	UNDERWORLD

Malabon
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1	LIBERATED
2	MAPANUKSO
3	MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
4	WRONG TURN

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PG13

CINEMA 2
MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
12:00, 2:45, 5:30, 8:15
PG13

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Touch Mobile's Home Info Text Service

WHERE can one find useful information as movie and television schedules, mouth-watering recipes and job openings, as well as helpful tips on child and health care, with just one click of a finger, and in the comfort of one's home?

With the introduction in the market of its new high-powered Super Family 64K SIM, Touch Mobile subscribers can now have ready access to family-related services and information anytime, anywhere through the Touch Mobile Home Info Text Service.

This new text-based service offers almost all the necessary information that every member of the family may need to know.

For instance, job hunting is made easier and less taxing as the subscriber can easily click on the listing of local job openings by industry, as well as information from the Philippines Overseas Employment Authority (POEA).

Subscribers who want to experiment with new dishes just have to click on the listing of recipes provided by Recipes from Sylvia's Kitchen.

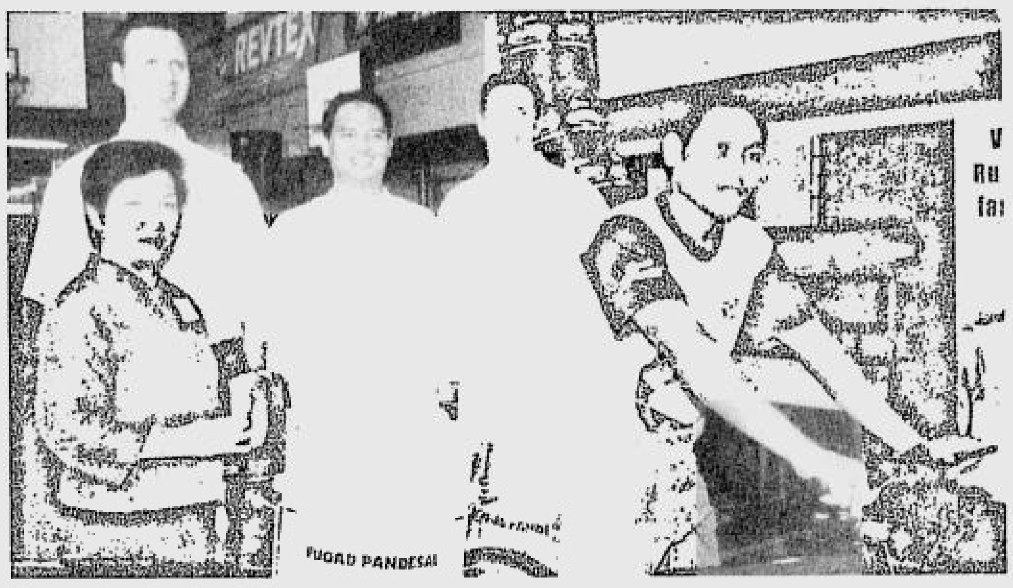
Instant information on family, as well as useful tips on relationships, child care, health, good buys, and making extra income are readily available in the Family Care category.

Other topics that are of particular interest to every member of the family include the latest news on business, sports, weather, showbiz and traffic, family vacation packages, movie and television schedules, daily spiritual reading and horoscopes, first aid tips, directory of important numbers, fun and games.

To access this new service, a 64K SIM user has to go to the touch Mobile Menu, click on TM Home Info and select the category he wants to access.

Non-64K SIM users can also access the service by texting the following keywords to 2994: FCARE (for family care), FENT (family entertainment), SYLVIA (recipes from Sylvia's kitchen), DG (daily guides), FA (first aid), NEWSINFO (news and info), EMPLOY (job openings), LOCATE (directory), FUN (fun and games), and MAIL (messaging).

The Home Info Text Service' costs P2.50 per download, except for ringtone downloads, and icon downloads and forwards, which cost P15 each.



CALTEX FUND EXPANDS TO INCLUDE PUGAD PANDESAL PROJECT

Caltex (Philippines) Inc, a Chevron Texaco company, recently launched the Pandesal Livelihood Project of Don Bosco Pugad, the latest partner-benificiary of the Caltex Fund, the company's flagship community engagement program. With start-up capital provided by this partnership, the Pugad Center envisions the bakery to be a self-sustaining project in the long-term that will also empower migrant youths with skills in bakery operations. Formally launching the Pugad Pandesal project were (from left): Department of Social Welfare and Development Undersecretary Luwalhati Pablo; Caltex (Philippines) Inc country chair Timothy Leveille; Pugad director Fr. Bong Javines, SDB and Makati Shangri-La Hotel chef Christopher Romine who were among the gourmets and foodies who donated pandesal fillings to complement the Pugad bread; and one of the Pugad 'Potpot' boys on his delivery bike.

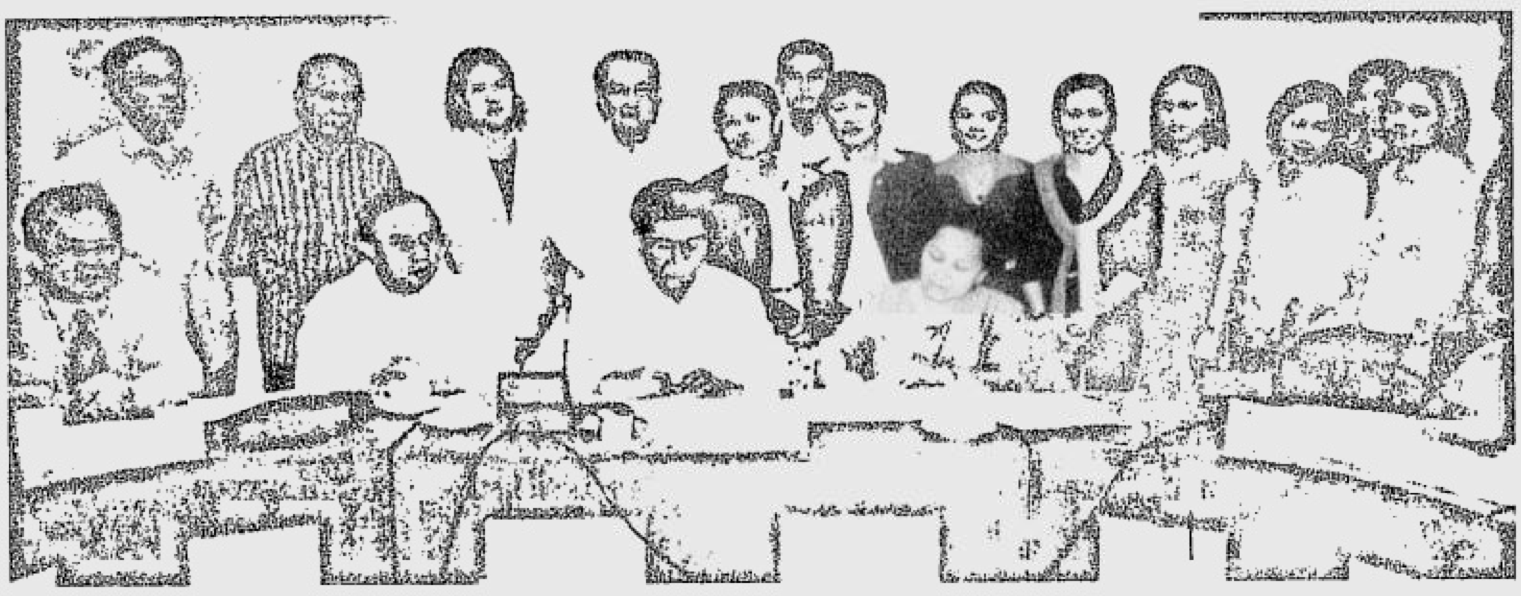
Clips

28th Annual Eletrical Engineering Meet

MAJOR stakeholders of the electrical industry will join this year's 28th Annual National Convention of the Institute of Integrated Electrical Engineers of the Philippines Inc (IIEE) on Nov. 18 to 22 at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City, carrying the theme "Strengthening the electrical practitioner for global competition". The event features several activities including technical sessions, product presentations and exhibit, student engineering and math competition, recognition of outstanding practitioners, and election of 2004 board of governors. Other features of the convention are the launching of the IIEE website, golf and bowling tournaments, singing competition, and raffle draw. Interested parties may call the IIEE national secretariat at 721-6442, 722-7383, 414-5626, or 412-5772 and look for Mylen Fernandez or Ludy Villegas.

Hotdog and Boyfriends at the Shang

POPULAR 70s bands Hotdog and Boyfriends will perform on Friday, Nov. 21, from 9 p.m. to 12 midnight, at Streetscape, Shangri-La Plaza's newest and hippest urban hub in Mandaluyong. The show promises to turn back time with hits like "Manila", "Ikaw ang Miss Universe ng Buhay Ko", and "Bongga Ka Day". Hotdog and Boyfriends broke into the music scene during the early 70's and from there carved a niche in that decade dominated by American and European bands. Their special blend of Western rhythm plus Filipino flavor proved to be a winning combination that made them popular and well-respected players in the Philippine music industry. Their mini concert promises to be a sure-fire hit in a long time. Admission is free.



HOUSING EXPO 2003 MOA SIGNING

Photo shows the signing of the memorandum of agreement between Congressman Prospero Nograles of, chair of the Committee on Housing and Urban Development, House of Representative and Lorna Navarro, president of Calasia Events Management Inc, for the Housing Expo 2003 held recently at the Philippine Trade and Training CEnter (PTTC). Witnessing are Congressman Ed Zialcita and Oscar Garcia, president of Rescop. Standing are Maloy Garcia, Housing Expo consultant; Mylene Capiña, event manager of Calasia Events Management Inc; Velma Abuzo of the Housing and Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC); Florida de Leon and Cynthia Monzon of the National Housing Authority (NHA); Leo Albano, president of Iprea and Delia Fabro of Rebap.

Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Office of the Ombudsman is inviting all interested and legitimate contractors to apply for eligibility and submit bid proposals for the Supply and Installation of Low Modular Partitions and Floor to Ceiling Modular Partitions for Hearing Rooms at PAMO with an approved budget of THREE MILLIONS PESOS (P3,000,000.00). The source of fund for this expense shall be taken from the Office General Fund.

Contract duration/Delivery and installation of the aforementioned shall be within 30 calendar days from the issuance of the notice to proceed.

All interested parties are invited to send their eligibility requirements/documents and procure the Bidding Documents from the Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Office of the Ombudsman Bldg., Agham Road, North Triangle, Quezon City c/o Mr. Reme S. Feliza, BAC Secretary, Tel. No. 926-9032 local 221, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00).

Listed hereunder are the required eligibility requirements/documents (whichever are applicable for single proprietorship or corporation) to be submitted in a certified true copy:

I. CLASS "A" DOCUMENTS
  A. LEGAL
    1. SEC/DTI Registration;
    2. Articles of Incorporation;
    3. Valid & Current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License;
    4. VAT Registration and TIN of Taxpayer;
    5. Income Tax Return for the Preceding Calendar Year;
    6. Statement of Prospective Bidder that it is not "blacklisted"/barred from bidding by the government/any of its agencies, offices, corporation/local government units;
    7. List of Clients;
    8. Company Profile;
    9. Authority of company representative.
  B. TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS

Statement of the prospective bidder of all its ongoing and completed government and private contracts within the period specified in the invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid including the contracts awarded but not yet started.

Statement should include:
    a) Name and location of the Contract/s;
    b) Date of contract/s;
    c) Kinds of good sold;
    d) Amount of Contract and Value of Outstanding Contracts;
    e) Date of delivery;
    f) End-user's acceptance if completed;
    g) Specification whether the prospective bidder is a manufacturer, supplier/distributor.
  C. FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS
    1) The prospective bidder's latest audited financial statements, stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions, for the immediately preceding calendar year, showing, among others, the prospective bidder's total and current assets and liabilities;
    2) The prospective bidder's computation for its Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which shall be in accordance with section 23.11 of the IRR-A; or a commitment from a licensed bank to extend to it a credit line if awarded the contract to the bid, or a cash deposit certificate, in an amount lot lower than that set by the procuring entity in the Bidding Documents, which shall be at least equal to ten percent (10%) of the approved budget for the contract to be bid

II. CLASS "B" DOCUMENTS
  1) Valid joint venture agreement, in case of a joint venture; and
  2) Letter authorizing the BAC or its duly authorized representative/s to verify any or all of the documents submitted for the eligibility check.

BAC shall use a "pass/fail" criteria to determine the eligibility of prospective bidders. As such, non-submission of the requested eligibility requirements will result in the disqualification of prospective bidders.

SCHEDULE OF BIDDING ACTIVITIES

1.	Pre-bid Conference	- November 27, 2003; 9:00 AM - BAC Secretariat, GSD Office of the Ombudsman Building, Quezon City
2.	Issuance of Bid and Eligibility Documents	- December 1, 2003 - BAC Secretariat, GSD Office of the Ombudsman Building, Quezon City
3.	Deadline of submission of Eligibility Documents & Bids	- December 15, 2003; 10:00 AM - BAC Secretariat, GSD Office of the Ombudsman Building, Quezon City
4.	Opening Bids	- December 15, 2003; 10:30 AM - BAC Secretariat, GSD Office of the Ombudsman Building, Quezon City

The Office of the Ombudsman reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive any defect or informality, and assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate indemnity to the bidders for any expenses that they may incur in the preparation of bids and to accept the offer most advantageous to the government. Any questions arising from the herein compliance shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.

(Sgd.) ERNESTO M. NOCOS
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Nov 18, 2003)

Digna Rosales.Raymond Yupangco.Bong de Ocampo.Del Paulino.

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Nick & Malu Lacson.Robert Dimacali.Mabel Ramos.Stella Santos Salcedo.

Marina Laroya.Lito Abesamis.Marina Khatibi.Liwayway Pelayo.Carissa Cervantes.

Adi Velasquez.Arlene Estrella.Delia Canuday.Angelo Estera.Leather Collection.Manels.

WORLD'S LARGEST FREE TRADE BLOC

Trade ministers start negotiations on FTAA

MIAMI —Trade officials from 34 nations in the Americas are negotiating details of the world's largest free trade bloc, a proposal that will likely determine whether local supermarkets sell beef from Brazil or oranges from Florida.

Agricultural tariffs and subsidies are among the most contentious topics of discussion for a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, or FTAA.

Brazil, which is co-hosting this week's meeting along with the United States, wants the United States to reduce or eliminate subsidies, quotas, tariffs and other barriers that protect American farmers.

The United States says agricultural issues should be decided by the 146-member World Trade Organization.

Brazil stood up the United States and Europe in September, leading a group of more than 20 nations who pushed for the elimination of agricultural subsidies.

Those talks collapsed with no agreement, but many smaller Latin American nations have abandoned Brazil and returned to a more US-friendly stance.

They include several Central American nations, a region that as a whole is wrapping up negotiations on a free trade agreement with the United States.

After the WTO talks collapsed, the United States focused its efforts on negotiating the FTAA, which it hopes to have complete by early 2005.

The free trade agreement would eliminate or reduce trade barriers among all nations in the Western Hemisphere, except Cuba, and have a collective output of more than $14 trillion a year.

Farm producers may have the most to lose — or gain.

Florida orange growers have opposed Brazil's efforts to lower US tariffs on orange juice imports, while Brazil is fighting to remove US import restrictions on its booming beef industry.

On Monday, business officials from across the Western Hemisphere will kick off three days of meetings on what they want to see out of an FTAA.

Many manufacturers in small, poorer nations are afraid they will be wiped out by more powerful US competitors.

Anthony Hosang, president of Trinidad & Tobago's Manufacturers' Association, said many are joking that the agreement should be called the Free Trade Agreement FOR America because many believe the United States will walk away from the negotiations with all the benefits.

The FTAA proposal is also drawing criticism from anti-globalization activists, a motley mix of environmentalists and union activists who plan to stage street protests throughout the week.

There are signs that Latin America won't tolerate a deal that doesn't help the region as a whole.

During the Ibero-American summit this weekend, Mexican President Vicente Fox said he and the leaders of Argentina, Brazil and Chile would fight for an agreement that would help — not hurt — smaller Latin American countries.

And Mexico, which has more than 30 free trade partners, doesn't seem to be in any hurry to find new ones.

Economy Secretary Fernando Canales said last week he was going to take a break from seeking out any more deals.

Although he said he is still interested in an FTAA, business leaders have complained that the dizzying pace of free trade negotiations have made it hard to take full advantage of the agreements already sealed.

British business slams US trade policy

BIRMINGHAM, England—Bellicose British business leaders meeting for their annual conference Monday urged US President George W. Bush to tear down trade barriers which they warned were destroying global prosperity

Gathering here on the eve of the US leader's state visit to Britain, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) urged Bush to reverse a slide towards "isolationism and protectionism" by scrapping controversial steel tariffs.

The country's top business grouping also turned the heat up under its own government with a stark warning that 70 percent of Britain's captains of industry believe the country is becoming less attractive to investors.

But the business chiefs turned their biggest guns on Bush, whose Treasury Secretary John Snow is to share a platform at the conference on Tuesday with his British counterpart Gordon Brown.

CBI President John Egan was to use his opening speech later Monday at the annual shindig in Birmingham, central England to warn that British companies are "deeply concerned" about US trade policy.

"There is a real danger of (the United States) sliding towards isolationism and protectionism. The rest of the world desperately needs America to stay engaged," he said in an advance copy of the speech.

Egan urges the United States to abandon its steel tariffs, which were declared illegal by the World Trade Organization last week.

"It is business everywhere that pays the price when politicians engage in trade wars. No government should avoid playing its part in removing trade barriers that destroy wealth." In a sign that the United States may be heeding such calls, a move towards ending trade restrictions between Europe and the United States was expected to be unveiled this week.

Britain, the United States and other countries "have agreed to proceed with a major trans-Atlantic review on how we can move beyond the old trade disputes and reap the benefits of greater trade and investment liberalization," Brown was expected to tell the conference.

"What binds America and Britain together is not simply a shared history but shared values," he was to say.

British business leaders want their prime minister, Tony Blair, to use his influence as Bush's closest international ally to ensure they are not discriminated against when doing business in the world's biggest economy.

Blair is expected to press Bush to ditch US tariffs on steel imports to avert a threat by the European Union to hit the United States with billions of dollars in sanctions in retaliation for the duties imposed in March 2002. *AFP*

AN ELDERLY woman rests while waiting for change beside a pedestrian overpass in Beijing. Despite the widening social divide emerging as a result of China's fast changing economy, the number of poor Chinese has fallen from a quarter billion at the start of economic reform in 1978 to 28 million today. AFP

Singapore posts fastest growth in 8 yrs

SINGAPORE—Singapore's economy hit its fastest growth rate since 1995 in the July to September quarter on strong demand for exports, beating official estimates and paving the way for a full-year expansion of around one percent.

But despite recovering from the damage inflicted by SARS, the tiny island is shaping up as Asia's slowest economy in 2003.

Neighboring Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia all surge ahead on the back of strong demand from China.

The pick up in activity from the key export markets of the United States and Japan likewise pushed these countries' economic growth.

Gross domestic product, the total value of all goods and services, grew at an annualized rate of 17.3 percent from the quarter to June.

This beat the government's advance estimate of 15 percent and market forecasts for 16 percent.

The government said the growth figure, which is seasonally adjusted, was the result of strong demand for electronics and pharmaceutical exports.

The growth was also due to a pick up in financial services as activity rises in the stock and foreign exchange markets.

"The outlook for Singapore's economic growth in 2004 seems much brighter now compared to a few months ago," said Friedrich Wu, director of the Economics Division at the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

The economy also grew 1.7 percent in the third quarter from a year ago, beating the official advance estimate of one percent.

Growth was helped by a rebound in the wholesale and retail sectors after the deadly Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak.

The SARS outbreak devastated travel and tourism businesses in Singapore's $89-billion economy. *Reuters*

Hutchison to miss targets for 3G—Li

HONG KONG—Hutchison Whampoa Ltd has pushed its planned break-even target for its third-generation mobile business back by a year due to delays in handset deliveries, according to newspaper reports on Monday

Chair Li Ka-shing told reporters at a company event on Sunday that the company now expects its global 3G business to reach break-even a year after enough handsets are available, which would be 2006, the Hong Kong Standard said.

Previously the ports-to-telecoms conglomerate had set 2005 as its target break-even date for 3G.

"One supplier delayed (delivery) for more than two months, then delivered none, which was unexpected. Motorola also delayed a lot. It made some deliveries, but that wasn't enough," Li was quoted as saying in the Hong Kong Standard.

A Hutchison spokeswoman confirmed the remarks by Li, Asia's richest businessman.

Besides Motorola, Hutchison has ordered handsets from Japan's NEC Corp as part of its $16.7 billion investment in 3G.

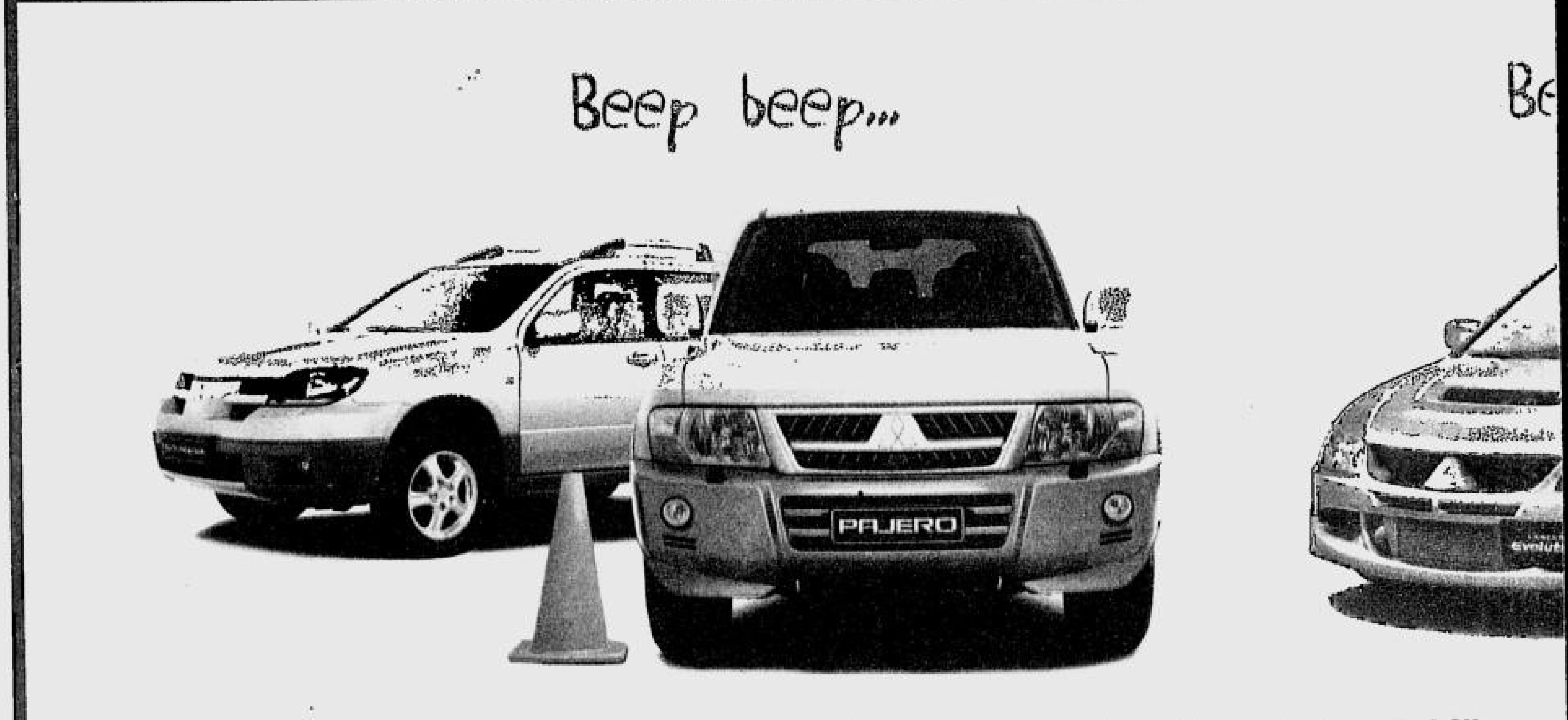
Hutchison earlier this year launched its high-speed multimedia-enabled 3G service in the United Kingdom and Italy, behind schedule.

Li said delays in receiving handsets would hurt Christmas sales, but he also downplayed the significance of the delay for the longer-term.

"Operations in some countries may break even faster than other more competitive markets, but it doesn't matter because we have all the funding and are positive on the prospects," Li said.

He said Hutchison was ready to launch 3G in Hong Kong this year but might wait so that handsets could go to Europe first.

Also over the weekend, banking sources told Reuters that Hutchison planned to begin marketing a huge, multi-tranche $3 billion bond of between seven and 30-year maturities to help refinance existing debt. *Reuters*



Come and explore the country's most exciting motorshow. Nov. 22-23 at the Bonifacio Global City.

Calling all Mitsubishi owners and enthusiasts. Enjoy 2 whole days of fun-filled family fair, as Mitsubishi Motors hosts a grand motorshow on Nov. 22 and 23 at the Bonifacio Global City. There are numerous campsites to explore.

Drive Camp. Test drive the new Mitsubishi Outlander and new Mitsubishi Pajero as well as other Mitsubishi vehicles.

MOTORSHOW CAMP. Marvel at the newest concept car as well as new Mitsubishi models. You can also show-off your classic Mitsubishi car through the Mitsubishi classic concourse.

PARTS AND APPAREL CAMP. Purchase Mitsubishi genuine parts and accessories as well as RALLIART apparels.

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Japan economic growth to remain modest in '04

TOKYO—Japan will see only moderate economic growth next year and deflation will continue, although it could fade from fiscal 2005/06, according to a poll by Reuters and Jiji News.

The poll of 91 economists, strategists and market participants in Japan found that the yen was expected to be within its recent range by the end of December 2003, but Tokyo stocks are forecast to be higher.

"On the assumption that the US economy doesn't falter, Japan will continue a moderate recovery led by capital spending and exports," said Shigeru Saito, general manager at Daiwa Asset Management.

Some 18 percent of the respondents said the recovery could become stronger next year, but 59 percent saw it continuing at a moderate pace.

Some 15 percent felt the economy would be flat and seven percent forecast a downturn.

Some economists expected a recovery only up to the first half of next year, after which it could slow down again.

"After (the first half), the economy will slow down as the Chinese economy worsens and capital spending slows cyclically," said Hiromichi Shirakawa, chief economist at UBS Warburg.

Half of the respondents said they expected deflation to end in fiscal 2005 or 2006. Only nine percent saw it ending during the fiscal year beginning April 2004.

Deflation, or a fall in consumer prices, is in its fourth year in Japan and has been blamed for holding down consumer and business spending and exacerbating debt.

"The Bank of Japan is expected to maintain its quantitative easing policy until April 2005, when the government lifts blanket guarantees on deposits," said Mari Iwashita, vice president of financial consulting at Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp.

"If the economy doesn't slow in the second half of 2004, there should be scope to see deflation end in 2005 and after," she said.

The government currently guarantees all deposits in ordinary accounts—which has in the past helped soothe concerns among the public about the fragile banks—but state protection will be capped from April 2005.

On markets, 60 percent of the respondents forecast a range for the yen of 105-110 per dollar for the end of this year, while 23 percent thought the yen would weaken to a range of 110-115.

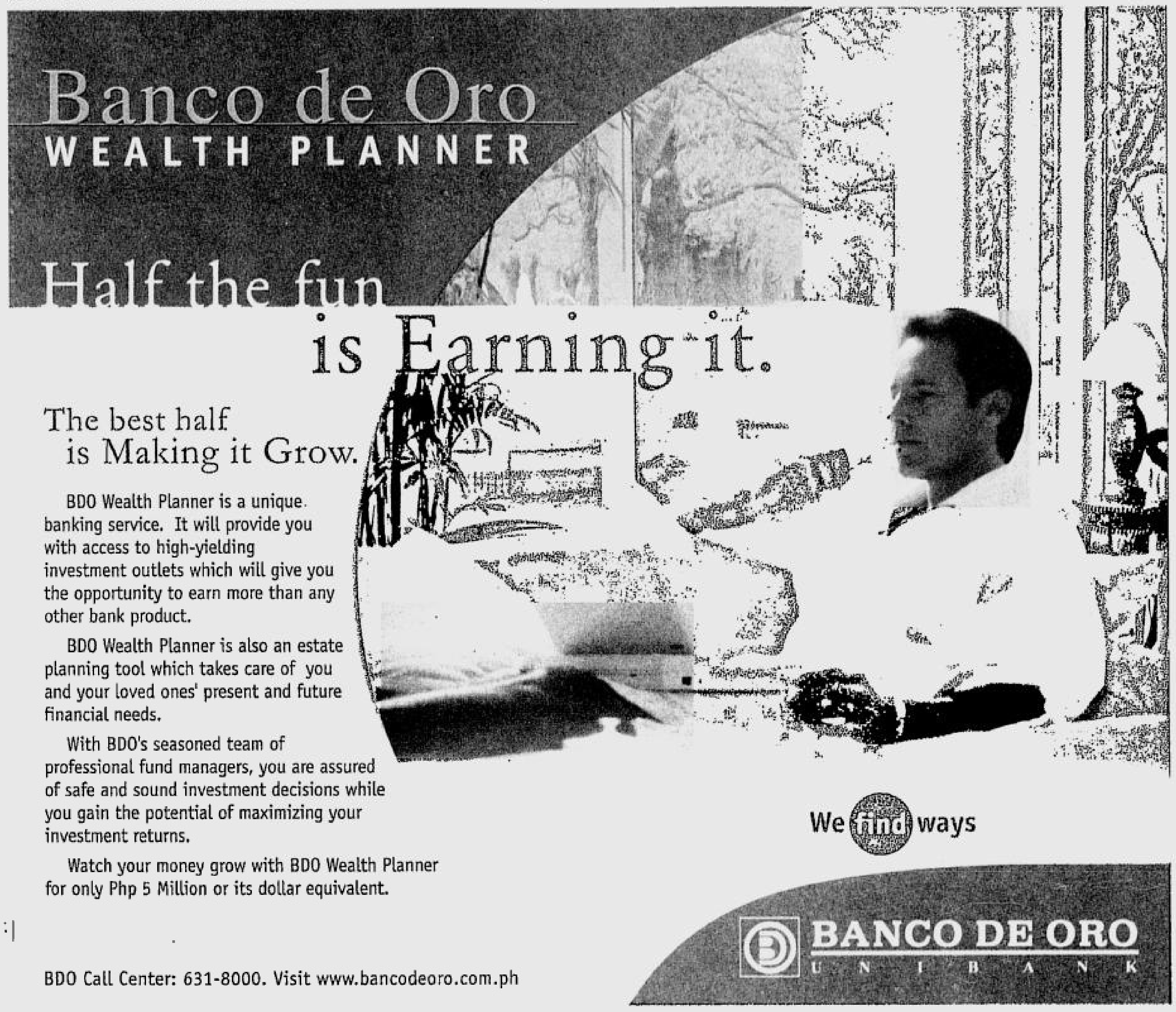
On Monday it traded around 109.20 per dollar compared with a recent high of 107.86.

Some 13 percent of respondents forecast a firming of the yen to 100-105 per dollar.

"Buying in Japanese assets may taper off, but the dollar will be under downward pressure given the US twin (trade and fiscal) deficits and before US elections next autumn," said Tetsuro Okada, senior economist at Japan Research Institute.

For stocks, half the respondents forecast the benchmark Nikkei stock average would be between 11,000 and 12,000 at the end of December, while 40 percent saw a range of 10,000 to 11,000. Reuters

A JAPANESE businessman passes a stock quotation board outside a brokerage in Tokyo. Japan's Nikkei average fell three percent on Monday and was below 10,000 for the first time since August as small investors continued to dump shares that had helped power its rally. REUTERS



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China retail sales see best growth in 2 yrs

BEIJING— China's October retail sales rose at their fastest pace in two years as the week-long National Day holiday gave consumers their first chance to flex their spending muscles since the SARS outbreak.

Retail sales jumped 10.2 percent in October compared with the year-earlier month, the State Statistical Bureau said on Monday.

It was the biggest rise since October 2001 when sales climbed 10.5 percent.

"This year's long Oct. 1 holiday was the first 'Golden Week' since SARS was defeated," the bureau said in a statement.

"The commercial, transportation, tourism and related sectors created a good environment for resting and shopping."

China has come to rely on its three Golden Week national holidays to boost the economy by encouraging people to travel and spend.

But the last holiday, the May 1 Labor Day break, was shortened due to the SARS outbreak, which badly hit retail sales as people hunkered down at home and avoided travel and shopping.

Hot retail items in October included mobile telephones, cars and furniture.

Sales of "telecommunications equipment" skyrocketed nearly 75 percent in October from a year earlier, the bureau said.

Car sales jumped more than 48 percent from a year earlier while furniture was up more than 40 percent and home appliances and audio-video gear rose 21.5 percent.

Despite growth numbers that would be phenomenal in a country like the United States or Japan, China's retail sales are seen as a weak spot in an economy being stoked by even stronger factory output, exports and investment.

Industrial output rose 17.2 percent in October from a year earlier while exports climbed nearly 37 percent, earlier data showed.

In the first nine months of this year the economy was up an annual 8.5 percent. *Reuters*

Foreign banks eye S. Korean retail lenders

SEOUL—Foreign banks, including Citigroup, HSBC Holdings and Standard Chartered, are hunting for acquisitions in South Korea's $424 billion consumer banking market, eyeing its growth potential and cheap valuations, analysts say.

Facing stalled growth elsewhere in Asia and in Hong Kong in particular, the banks are seen looking to take advantage of the fallout from a credit card debt blowout, which has hammered valuations of consumer banks.

HSBC and Standard Chartered have a history of buying troubled consumer banking operations cheaply in emerging or high growth markets before using their capital strength and turnaround expertise to fix the businesses.

"On a regional basis, South Korea's banking market has more growth potential than other Asian countries," said Mok Young-chung, a banking analyst at ING. "For regional banks, they lack coverage in South Korea."

But the foreign banks will have to move fast, say analysts.

Within a few years, they will face much tougher competition from the big four local banks—Kookmin Bank, Shinhan Financial, Woori Financial and Hana Bank—who have grown through mergers and acquisitions after the 1998/99 financial crisis.

"In three years time, when recently merged banks are expected to generate synergy effects, foreign banks will face more difficulties increasing their market share," said Jason Yu, a banking analyst at Samsung Securities.

The big four local lenders in the country control more than 70 percent of South Korea's banking sector.

In contrast, smaller lenders Koram Bank and Korea First Bank have been left out of the recent takeover activity, spurring speculation they are targets. *Reuters*

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Issuance of Bid Documents	Nov. 26, to Dec. 05, 2003 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Opening/Submission of bids	December 10, 2003, Wed. 10:00 a.m.

The CCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any defect therein and make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the CCWD. The CCWD likewise assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

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(PDI – Nov. 18 & 25, 2003)

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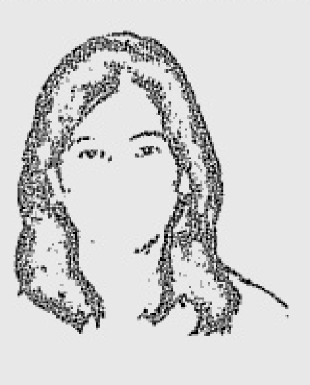

This is to inform the general public that **Ms. MARICAR C. ABRIGO** is no longer connected with **CD TECHNOLOGIES ASIA, INC.** Any and all transactions left pending with Ms. Abrigo must be directed to the Administrative Department of the said company at 631-9748 or 634-7140.

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(PDI – November 18, 2003)

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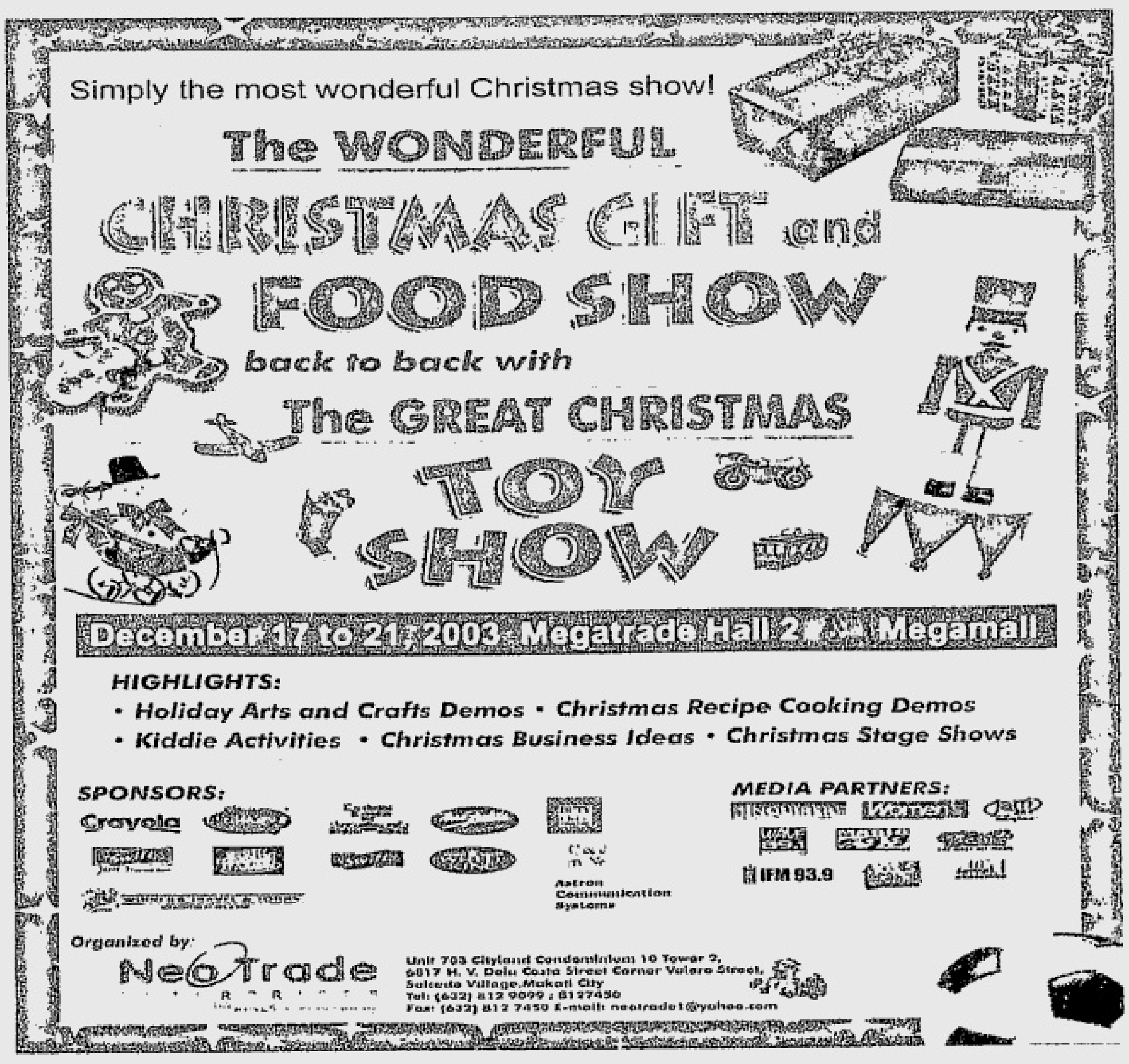

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PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED COOPERATIVE BANK OF DAVAO ORIENTAL

1. Starting November 18, 2003, the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) thru its duly authorized representatives shall receive claims for insured deposits maintained with the closed Cooperative Bank of Davao Oriental (CBDO) Head Office and Mati Branch.
2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of the said closed bank on the following dates, to file claims for insured deposits:

CBDO Banking Unit	Servicing Site	Servicing Dates
Head Office	Market Site, Lupon Davao Oriental	Nov. 18 to Dec. 11, 2003
Mati Branch -with extension office at Sigaboy (now Gov. Generoso), Davao Oriental	Limatoc, Mati Davao Oriental	Nov. 18 to Dec. 11, 2003

PDIC representatives are stationed at the premises of the closed bank on the abovecited dates to accept claims and entertain queries of depositors during office hours, Monday to Friday.

After the said dates, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Office from Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., or by mail addressed to-

**The Manager
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3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to the PDIC representatives when filing their claims:

   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook and/or Certificate of Time Deposits.
   b. Valid identification documents (ID) bearing the depositor's signature.

   Other documents may be required by the PDIC representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.

4. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591, as amended, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Cooperative Bank of Davao Oriental is on **April 09, 2005.** After **April 09, 2005**, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

(PDI--Nov. 17 & 18, 2003)

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council
HOUSING AND LAND USE REGULATORY BOARD

BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 750
Series of 2003

LIBERALIZING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION AND LICENSE TO SELL FOR FARMLOT SUBDIVISIONS

WHEREAS, the Implementing Rules and Regulations defines Farmlot Subdivision as a planned community intended primarily for agricultural activity;

WHEREAS, the Board is of the position that DAR Conversion Clearance need not be required in the issuance of Certificate of Registration and License to Sell for Farmlot Subdivisions since there is no change in principal use;

WHEREAS, the issuance of Certificate of Registration and License to Sell by this Board does not exempt grantees thereof from compliance with and is without prejudice to the provisions of other laws;

WHEREFORE, be it resolved, as it is hereby resolved, that this Board shall no longer require a DAR Conversion Clearance as a precondition for issuance of Certificate of Registration and License to Sell for Farmlot Subdivisions.

APPROVED, this 15th day of October 2003, Quezon City

MICHAEL T. DEFENSOR
Chairman, HUDCC

JOSE C. CALIDA
Undersecretary, DOJ

ROMULO Q.M. FABUL
Commissioner and
Chief Executive Officer

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DPWH

JESUS YAP PANG
Commissioner

Attested:

CHARITO B. LANSANG
Board Secretary

National Power Corporation

ADDENDUM NO. 1
AD. NO. NPC-PSD-2003-011 & 12

TO : ALL PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS

Please be informed that the scheduled Public Bidding and Pre-bid Conference for the above subject advertisements will be reset as follows:

1. ADV. NO. NPC-PSD-2003-011

PUBLIC BIDDING		
Schedule	From	To
11A1-11A3/11B1-11B2	December 1, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	December 8, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
11C1-11C3/11D1-11D2	December 2, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	December 9, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
11E1-11E3/11F1-11F3	December 3, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	December 10, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
11G1-11G3/11H1-11H3	December 4, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	December 11, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
PRE-BIDDING CONFERENCE		
11A3, 11C2-11C3	November 12, 2003 9:00 AM	November 21, 2003 9:00 AM
11D2 & 11E1/11E2-11E3	November 13, 2003 10:00 AM / 2:00 PM	November 24, 2003 10:00 AM / 2:00 PM
11F1 & 11F3/11G1-11G3 & 11H1	November 14, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	November 25, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM

2. ADV. NO. NPC-PSD-2003-012

PUBLIC BIDDING		
12A1-12A3/12B1-11B3	December 11, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	December 16, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
12C1, 12C3-12C4/12D1-12D2	December 12, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	December 12, 2003 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
12E1-12E2	December 15, 2003 9:00 AM	December 15, 2003 9:00 AM
PRE-BIDDING CONFERENCE		
12A3 & 12B3/12C1 & 12D1	November 26, 2003 10:00 AM / 2:00 PM	November 28, 2003 10:00 AM / 2:00 PM
12E1 & 12E2	November 27, 2003 10:00 AM	November 27, 2003 10:00 AM

Note: Issuance of Bid Documents starts on November 17, 2003. Last day of issuance shall be seven (7) calendar days before the bidding date for each schedule.
Please be guided accordingly.

CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee
PSD-NPC

(PDI - Nov. 18, 2003)

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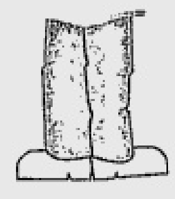

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2:00 pm THURSDAY NOVEMBER 20th, 2003
GROUND FLOOR, EXPORTBANK PLAZA, CORNER OF EXPORTBANK DRIVE
AND CHINO ROCES AVE., MAKATI CITY, METRO MANILA

ANTIPOLO

Property No. 1 – Lot Only LA: 216 sq.m.
B3/L3 Cascades Subd., Brgy Bayugo
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,015,200

P-No. 2 - Lot Only LA: 649 sq.m.
B5 L17 Cottonwood Heights Subd. Brgy Bayugo
Minimum Bid Price: Php 3,050,300

P-No. 3 - Lot Only LA: 303 sq.m.
B10/L3 Cottonwood Heights Subd. Brgy Bayugo
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,424,100

P-No. 4 – Lot Only LA: 283 sq.m.
B14/L14 Cottonwood Heights Subd. Brgy Bayugo
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,330,100

P-No. 5 – Lot Only LA: 219 sq.m.
B14/L13 Cottonwood Heights Subd. Brgy Bayugo
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,029,300

P-No. 6 - Lot Only LA: 335 sq.m.
B1/L20 Foliage Hills Subd. Brgy Bayugo
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,574,500

P-No. 7 - Lot Only LA: 267 sq.m.
B3/L1 Foliage Hills Subd. Brgy Bayugo
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,254,900

P-No. 8 - Lot Only LA: 252 sq.m.
L2/Psd 04-142064 Gardens of Maia, M. L. Quezon Ave.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 882,000

P-No. 9 - Lot Only LA: 226 sq.m.
B14 L20 Gardens of Maia, M. L. Quezon Ave.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 791,000

P-No. 10 Lot Only LA: 161 sq.m.
B7 L28 Gardens of Maia, M. L. Quezon Ave.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 563,500

P-No. 11 Lot Only LA: 191 sq.m.
B7 L39 Gardens of Maia, M. L. Quezon Ave.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 668,500

P-No. 12 Lot Only LA: 240 sq.m.
B8 L21 Gardens of Maia, M. L. Quezon Ave.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 840,000

P-No. 13 Lot Only LA: 293 sq.m.
B1 L33 Hills of Maia, M. L. Quezon Ave.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,025,500

P-No. 14 Lot Only LA: 237 sq.m.
B4 L32 Hills of Maia, M. L. Quezon Ave.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 829,500

P-No. 15 Lot Only LA: 200 sq.m.
B1 L36 Hills of Maia, M. L. Quezon Ave.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 700,000

P-No. 16 Lot Only LA: 173 sq.m.
B4 L33 Hills of Maia, M. L. Quezon Ave.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 605,500

P-No. 17 Lot Only LA: 167 sq.m.
B1 L34 Hills of Maia, M. L. Quezon Ave.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 584,500

P-No. 18 Lot Only LA: 186 sq.m.
B9 L10 Hills of Maia, M. L. Quezon Ave.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 651,000

P-No. 19 Lot Only LA: 196 sq.m.
B9 L14 Hills of Maia, M. L. Quezon Ave.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 686,000

P-No. 20 Lot Only LA: 164 sq.m.
B2 L6 Maia Alta, M. L. Quezon Ave
Minimum Bid Price: Php 574,000

P-No. 21 Lot Only LA: 168 sq.m.
B2 L8 Maia Alta, M. L. Quezon Ave
Minimum Bid Price: Php 588,000

P-No. 22 Lot Only LA: 162 sq.m.
B2 L5 Maia Alta, M. L. Quezon Ave
Minimum Bid Price: Php 567,000

CALOOCAN

P-No. 23 – Lot Only LA: 87 sq.m.
B6 L9 Grande Vita Subd., Galas Rd.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 261,000

P-No. 24 – Lot Only LA: 89 sq.m.
B6/L10 Grande Vita Subd., Galas Rd.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 267,000

P-No. 25 – Lot Only LA: 92 sq.m.
B6/L11 Grande Vita Subd., Galas Rd.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 276,000

P-No. 26 - Lot Only LA: 169 sq.m.
B7/L21 Grande Vita Subd., Galas Rd.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 507,000

P-No. 27 – Lot Only LA: 112 sq.m.
B7/L22 Grande Vita Subd., Galas Rd.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 336,000

P-No. 28 - Lot Only LA: 82 sq.m.
B7/L23 Grande Vita Subd., Galas Rd.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 246,000

P-No. 29 - Lot Only LA: 129 sq.m.
B7/L24 Grande Vita Subd., Galas Rd.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 387,000

P-No. 30 - Lot Only LA: 166 sq.m.
B2/L25 Residenza 2 Subd., Deparo Rd.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 913,000

CAVITE (BACOOR)

P-No. 31 Lot Only LA: 304 sq.m.
B6/L1 Lessinia de Cita Italia, Brgy. Mambog 3
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,368,000

P.No. 32 – Lot Only LA: 244 sq.m.
B9/L24 Lessinia de Cita Italia, Brgy. Mambog 3
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,098,000

P/No. 33 – Lot Only LA: 163 sq.m.
B1/L24 Roma de Cita Italia, Brgy. Mambog 3
Minimum Bid Price: Php 733,500

P/No. 34 - Lot Only LA: 148 sq.m.
B1/L19 Roma de Cita Italia, Brgy. Mambog 3
Minimum Bid Price: Php 666,000

P/No. 35 - Lot Only LA: 217 sq.m.
B1-L17 Venezia de Cita Italia, Brgy. Mambog 3
Minimum Bid Price: Php 976,500

P-No. 36 – Lot Only LA: 209 sq.m.
B7/L33 Verona de Cita Italia, Brgy. Mambog 3
Minimum Bid Price: Php 940,500

P-No. 37 - Lot Only LA: 139 sq.m.
B7 L34 Verona de Cita Italia, Brgy. Mambog 3
Minimum Bid Price: Php 625,500

CAVITE (DASMARINAS)

P-No. 38 Lot Only LA: 605 sq.m.
B11/L10 Island Park Subd., Phase 1, Brgy Paliparan
Minimum Bid Price: Php 3,932,500

P-No. 39 - Lot Only LA: 340 sq.m.
B1 L9 Island Park Subd., Phase 1, Brgy Paliparan
Minimum Bid Price: Php 2,210,000

LAGUNA (SAN PEDRO)

P-No. 40 - Lot Only LA: 219 sq.m.
B11/L1 La Marea 1 Subd.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,029,300

P-No. 41 - Lot Only LA: 202 sq.m.
B11 L2 La Marea 1 Subd.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 949,400

P-No. 42 - Lot Only LA: 185 sq.m.
B14 L1 La Marea 1 Subd.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 869,500

P-No. 43 - Lot Only LA: 264 sq.m.
B1/L41 La Marea Hills Subd.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,240,800

P-No. 44 – Lot Only LA: 283 sq.m.
B9 L4 Trails of La Marea Subd.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,330,100

LAGUNA (STA. ROSA)

P-No. 45 - Lot Only LA: 578 sq.m.
B7/L17 Belle Reve Subd., Brgy. Don Jose
Minimum Bid Price: Php 3,468,000

P-No. 46 - Lot Only LA: 840 sq.m.
B11/L19 Belle Reve Subd., Brgy. Don Jose
Minimum Bid Price: Php 5,040,000

P-No. 47 - Lot Only LA: 681 sq.m.
B11/L71 Belle Reve Subd., Brgy. Don Jose
Minimum Bid Price: Php 4,086,000

P-No. 48 - Lot Only LA: 720 sq.m.
L2079-A-3-D-3-C-4 Brgy. Don Jose
Minimum Bid Price: Php 3,600,000

P-No. 49 - Lot Only LA: 216 sq.m.
B16/L9 La Residencia De Santa Rosa,
Brgy. Don Jose
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,188,000

P-No. 50 – Lot Only LA: 182 sq.m.
B17/L27 La Residencia De Santa Rosa,
Brgy. Don Jose
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,001,000

LAS PINAS

P-No. 51 – Lot Only LA: 420 sq.m.
B26/L38 Cul De Sac, Lourdes Atienza St.,
BF Resort Village
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,890,000

MAKATI

P-No. 52 - Commercial Condo. FA: 66.40 sq.m.
Unit 2310 Cityland 10 Condominium,
H. V. dela Costa St.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,992,000

P-No. 53 – Commercial Condo. FA: 81.28 sq.m.
Unit 2311 Cityland 10 Condominium, H. V. dela Costa St.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 2,438,400

P-No. 54 – Residential Condo. FA: 69.65 sq.m.
Unit 417 Makati Terraces Condo., Davila St.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,393,000

PARANAQUE

P-No. 55 House & Lot LA: 280 sq.m./
FA: 200 sq.m.
No. 22 Canton St., BF Executive Village
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,960,000

QUEZON CITY

P-No. 56 Lot Only LA: 243 sq.m.
B2/L25 La Brea Subd., Fairview
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,701,000

P-No. 57 Lot Only LA: 276 sq.m.
B4-L35 La Brea Subd., Fairview
Minimum Bid Price: Php 1,932,000

P-No. 58 - Lot Only LA: 306 sq.m.
B1/L1 La Brea Subd., Fairview
Minimum Bid Price: Php 2,142,000

P-No. 59 House & Lot LA: 601 sq.m./
FA: 106 sq.m.
No. 47 Pallmall St., East Fairview
Minimum Bid Price: Php 2,404,000

P-No. 60 - Residential Condo. FA: 66.15 sq.m.
Unit 5D Timog Condo. Centre Apts., Panay Ave.
Minimum Bid Price: Php 992,250

RIZAL (TAYTAY)

P-No. 61 Lot Only LA: 96.50 sq.m.
B7A/L20B Palmera Homes 3, Bgy. Dolores
Minimum Bid Price: Php 193,000

P-No. 62 - Lot Only LA: 125 sq.m.
B6-L13 Palmera Homes 3, Bgy. Dolores
Minimum Bid Price: Php 250,000

RIZAL (TERESA)

P-No. 63 Lot Only LA: 80 sq.m.
B16 L13 La Hacienda Subd
Minimum Bid Price: Php 240,000

P-No. 64 – Lot Only LA: 63 sq.m.
B16 L14 La Hacienda Subd
Minimum Bid Price: Php 189,000

P-No. 65 Lot Only LA: 63 sq.m.
B16 L15 La Hacienda Subd
Minimum Bid Price: Php 189,000

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Pilar Street, Zamboanga City 7000

Tel. No. 991-1553 991-1857
Fax No. 991-2279
E-mail Address:
zcwdccsd@jetlink.com.ph

INVITATION TO BID

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT (ZCWD) is inviting interested Licensed Truck Dealers to submit bids for the following:

PR/JO No.	DESCRIPTION
6830	Brand New 6 Wheeler Cargo Truck, Double Tire with Heavy Duty Hook for Towing, Standard Tools, Brand New Tires and Battery, LTO Registration in the name of Zamboanga City Water District preferably Isuzu Elf. Diesel Engine Driven. Drop side – 16" high Approved Budget Cost: P1,117,000.00

Interested Licensed Truck Dealers may obtain *Bid Forms and Detailed Specifications* at the BAC Secretariat, 2/F, ZCWD Bldg., Pilar St., Zamboanga City after payment of a minimal non-refundable fee of P250.00.

Submission of Bids: November 25, 2003
2:00 PM AT THE 2/F ZCWD BLDG.,
PILAR ST., ZAMBOANGA CITY

Thye ZCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive minor informalities in the bids received, and to award the contract to the supplier whose bid, as evaluated by the BAC 1, is the most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) ARNULFO A. ALFONSO
BAC 1 Chairman

(PDI – November 11 & 18, 2003)

2ND INVITATION TO UNDERTAKE THE PROPOSED ISABEL, LEYTE, PROVINCE OF LEYTE, REGION VIII, RECLAMATION PROJECT UNDER A JOINT VENTURE ARRANGEMENT

The Municipality of Isabel, Leyte (Municipality) is inviting interested parties to submit proposal to undertake the reclamation and development of about One Hundred Twenty Eight (128) hectares of foreshore and offshore areas (Project) along Dupong Bay, Isabel, Leyte intended for mixed use development such as commercial, industrial, residential, among others

The Project shall be undertaken on a joint venture arrangement with the Municipality whereby the Proponent/Developer shall advance all costs of reclamation and development and shall be paid in the form of land rental or land to be reclaimed.

The Proponent/Developer must show proof of its legal, technical and financial capability and must submit the following pre-qualification documents attached to its letter of intent addressed to the Municipality to undertake the Project.

1. Non-Refundable Filing Fee in the amount of P22,000.00 inclusive of VAT payable to the Municipality in the form of cash, manager's check or cashier's check;
2. Original copy of SEC Certification of Good Standing/Record;
3. Complete set of legal documents of the organization, i.e., Company Profile for Principal Proponent and each firm and member/s if consortium, SEC Registration, Articles of Incorporation & By-Laws, and Company Profile, Business Registration and License Papers;
4. Audited Financial Statements for the last three (3) years (balance sheet and income statement) of Principal Proponent duly filed/stamped received by BIR;
5. Affidavit of Undertaking that if awarded the contract, to provide financing for the Project estimated to be not less than P1.587 Billon.
6. Credit lines in specific amount issued and certified by reputable bank/s and financing institution/s;

All qualified Proponent(s)/Developer(s) shall be advised to submit project Pre-Feasibility Study and Financial Proposal which shall be the basis of award by Municipality of the Project.

Deadline for submission of Letter of Intent to undertake the Project including required attachments shall be on December 18, 2003 at the office of the Mayor, Isabel, Leyte Tel. Nos. (053) 337-2053, not later than 5:00 p.m.

(Sgd.) ROBERTO P. FUENTES, JR.
Municipal Mayor

(PDI-November 16, 17 & 18, 2003)

CONFEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Level 7, GSIS Bldg., Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City
Telephone No. 891-6366

ANNOUNCEMENT

In view of the declaration of November 26, 2003, as a special public holiday, the COGEO General Assembly has been moved from November 26, 2003, as previously announced, to **November 28, 2003**, at the GSIS Theater at 8:00 am.

PDI - November 18, 2003

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sales@heritagepark.com.ph

The Partners, Associates and Staff of

QUISUMBING TORRES

announce with deep sorrow that

ATTY. EDGARDO M. DE VERA

Partner

peacefully joined his Creator
on 17 November 2003
at the age of 49

and express their sympathy
to his wife, Liza and children: Isha, Iggy and Inya
and family.

His remains lie in state at the St. Jerome Emiliani Church
and Sta. Susana Parish, Commerce St.,
Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City.

The Funeral Mass will be on
Thursday, 20 November 2003 at 9:00 a.m.
Cremation will follow after the mass.

Please pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

In loving memory
on the eighth death anniversary of the late

ANTONIO R. DE JOYA

who peacefully passed away on November 19, 1995,
Holy Masses will be offered on Wednesday, November 19, 2003
at the following churches:

SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHAPLAINCY Hillsborough Village, Muntinlupa City	6:00 a. m.
OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL PARISH Dona Juana Rodriguez Avenue, New Manila, Quezon City	7:00 a. m.
ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGUORI PARISH Magallanes Village, Makati City	7:00 a. m.
ST. JOSEPH PARISH Aurora Boulevard, Project 3, Quezon City	7:45 a. m.
PARISH OF THE HOLY SACRIFICE University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City	12:00 noon
SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City	12:15 noon
SHRINE OF MARY, QUEEN OF PEACE (OUR LADY OF EDSA) EDSA cor. Ortigas Avenue, Quezon City	12:15 noon
NATIVITY OF OUR LADY PARISH Major Dizon St., Industrial Valley Subd., Marikina City	6:00 p.m.
STA. MARIA DELLA STRADA PARISH Katipunan Road, cor. Pansol St., Quezon City	6:00 p.m.
CHRIST THE KING PARISH Green Meadows Avenue, Quezon City	6:00 p.m.
OUR LADY OF BEAUTIFUL LOVE PARISH Merville Park, Parañaque	6:00 p.m.
OUR LADY OF PENTECOST PARISH 12 F. dela Rosa St. cor. C. Salvador St., Loyola Heights, Quezon City	6:30 p.m.

His wife, Lina P. de Joya, his children, Lito, Mon and Cecile, his sister, Remedios and Nenita and his brother, Federico, request relatives, friends and pious readers to join them in prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.

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*"For those whose lives she has touched...
she will surely be missed."*

Our beloved

Carmencita "Momsy" Hernandez Orros

*Peacefully joined her Creator
on November 12, 2003 at the age of 57.*

Her bereaved husband **JOAQUIN "QUINIT" O. ORROS**; loving children **JUSTITO & DINA, MARICAR & DONG, JACK. JOHN & MARITZ, MARICRIS**; grandchildren **JV,JJ. WILQUIN. TITOY. JOHNNIE, NIÑA. JUSTIN. WESLEY. JACKIE, CHARMIE, IANNA. SOPHIA**; relatives and friends enjoin the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in 30 Hufano St., Lingsat, City of San Fernando, La Union. Necrological services will be on Wednesday, November 19, 2003, 9:00 a.m. at St. William's Cathedral.

Interment will follow at Lingsat Cemetery.

"For God so loved the World, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have Everlasting life." —John 3:16

OUR DEAREST STAR HAS LEFT US TO JOIN THE OTHER STARS IN THE HEAVENS .... NOW HER LIGHT IS SHINING OVER US FOREVER ......

MARIA ROBERTA ESTRELLA PAREJA MONTAÑO

"STAR"

Passed away in the Grace of Our Lord
on November 16, 2003 at the age of 24.

Her loving parents, **Maj. Gen. Ramon E. Montaño** and **Vice Mayor Fe Pareja Montaño**; brothers **Rommel** and **Rian**; sister-in-law **Maripaz**; nieces **Roxanne, Ysabella, Christina** and nephew **Anton** and other relatives and friends request for prayers for her eternal rest.

Star lies in state at the Jacinto Chapel, La Funeraria Paz, Sucat, Parañaque until November 19, 2003.

Interment will be on Sunday, November 23, 2003 in San Jose Negros Oriental, in the afternoon.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

ARLINGTON MEMORIAL CHAPEL
12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City;
Tels. 715-1025; 715-1031; 715-1027

ARLINGTON EAST THE GARDEN CHAPELS
C. Raymundo St. cor. Mercedes Ave.,
San Miguel Ave., Pasig City
Tels. 747-8599; 747-8609 • Telefax 641-1760

AUREA QUIOGUE FUNERAL HOMES
243 A.B. Fernandez Ave.,
Dagupan City, Pangasinan
Tels. (0785) 522-3451; 522-2128; (0917) 434-9976

CAPITOL MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
1305 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City
Tel. 732-0309; 732-1095

CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad,
Mandaue City, Cebu; Tels. 346-2543; 346-2601

COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City;
Tels. 231-0721; 231-3192

COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City;
Tels. (082) 227-1201; 227-1258

DAYAO FUNERAL HOME
#2 Bayani St., Galas, Quezon City;
Tels. 740-2683; 781-3705; 781-3688;
413-9400; 715-5594

DALLUAY MEMORIAL SERVICES
#42 Upper Kalaklan, Olongapo City
Tels. (047) 222-3605; (047) 811-1086;
(047) 222-4512; (047) 224-2014

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Jose Abad Santos Ave. cor. Dinalupihan St.,
Manuguit, Manila
Tels. 712-5102; 741-5125; 741-5133;
Fax No. 711-3064

DYNASTY MEMORIAL CHAPELS
965 Del Monte Ave., Frisco, Quezon City; Tels. 416-3231; 4162373

ERIC SANTIAGO MEMORIAL CHAPELS
26 Bayanbayan Ave., Concepcion I, Marikina City;
Tels. 942-6044; 475-1177

FLORESCO FUNERAL HOME
219 Gen. Luna St., Concepcion, Malabon, Metro
Manila; Tels. 2812963; 2813034; 2810522

FUNERARIA PANGILINAN
Santo Entierro cor. P. Burgos St.,
Lourdes Sur, Angeles City
Tels. (045) 888-2959 ; (045) 322-5247

FUNERARIA ANGEL QUIOGUE
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on the 1st Anniversary of his rebirth to eternal life
(November 18, 2003)

His wife **Crescencia Consunji Cabigao**; children **Ed & Olive, Marilou & Rey, Mike & Pinky, Ann & Orly, Joseph & Jocelyn, Menchu & Cris**, and grandchildren request his relatives and friends to offer prayers for his eternal repose.

Masses will be offered at the following:

St. Anne's Parish, Garden City, NY, USA
St. Peter's Church, Memphis, TN, USA
St. Martha & Mary Church, Mississauga, Ont., Canada
St. Patrick's Church, Mississauga, Ont., Canada
Monastery of Mt. Carmel, Niagara Falls, Ont., Canada
Sto. Domingo Church .... 6:00 pm
Santuario de San Jose .... 6:15 am
Mt. Carmel Church .... 7:00 am
Christ the King .... 6:00 am
Immaculate Concepcion .... 5:30 pm
Sts. Peter & Paul Church .... 6:00 am
St. Francis Church .... 7:00 am
Our Lady of All Nations Chapel .... 5:15 pm

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Whoever believes in Me... will never die."
(John 11:26)

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December 4, 1904 - November 16, 2003

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Beloved MOTHER of: **Maria Teresa, Emma, Manuel Jr. & Nina (Romualdez), Carlos & Rufi (Salazar), Maria Consuelo & Florante Navarro, Jaime** & the late **Josie (Ambrosio)** and **Francisco & Mary Anne (Busuego)**.

Loving GRANDMOTHER of: **Trickie & Randy Lopa, Mickey & Maya, Caloy & Bem, Tisha, Reena, Owine & Tong Duran, Rolfie, Noel & Jennie, Francis, Mitzi**, and **J.R. Navarro, Jaycee & Lia, Joem & Jennee, Jonpy, Cessie, Ina & Tonichi Bautista, Lia & Ferry Corsten** and GREAT GRANDMOTHER of: **Martie, Anton, Rafa, Tino, Gabby, Sami, Hans.**

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE ETERNAL REPOSE OF HER SOUL.

Her cremated remains are at Santuario de San Antonio Parish Center, Function Rooms 11 & 12. Funeral Mass at Santuario de San Antonio Forbes Park, Makati. 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, November 19, 2003.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Ateneo de Manila University for the MANUEL C. COLAYCO, Sr. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION will be highly appreciated.

CATALINO MACARAIG, JR.

Beloved son to **Ignacia**;
husband to **Celi**; Papa to **Maris, Bambi, Mel, Nina, Nubbin & Twink**; father-in-law to **Krip, Pocholo, Albert & Cathy**; Lolo to **Alyo, Aric, Jodie, Mirava, Kitkat, Mica, Jao, Jacpat, Jamie, Willis, Juancho & Theo**; lawyer, teacher, mentor, friend and public servant.

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on 17 November 2003 at the age of 76.

He shall be profoundly missed.

His remains lie in state at the Santuario de San Antonio Chapel, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be on 21 November 2003, following a morning Mass.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the UP Law Alumni Foundation, Inc. would please **"Mac"**.

I am the way,
the truth and the life.
No one comes
to the Father
except through Me.
John 14:6

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NORMAN ALIWALAS PASCUAL

Passed away peacefully in Savannah, Georgia, U.S.A., on October 28, 2003.

He is survived by his wife **Anita Buenviaje**, children **Roberto** and **Joan, Vernon** and **Elizabeth, Carmina**; brother and sisters; in-laws and grandchildren.

His remains will be interred on Saturday, November 22, 2003 at the Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park, Tandang Sora, Quezon City, after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Sta. Maria della Strada Church in La Vista, Quezon City.

Aboitiz open to settling dispute with Garcias

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ABOITIZ group is open to the possibility of forging an out-of-court settlement with the Garcia family to settle their dispute over shares in Cebu-based power distributor Visayan Electric Co., one of the country's largest power distributors outside Metro Manila.

"We are open to talking with them. We're willing to listen," Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. president and CEO Jon Ramon Aboitiz said in a recent briefing with INQUIRER.

Last September, AEV and its wholly-owned subisdiary Aboitiz Power Corp. questioned before the Regional Trial Court in Cebu a transaction involving the swap of about 2.09 million Veco shares owned by Hijos de F. Escaño Inc., equivalent to 30 percent of the power distributor's equity, for shares in Vivant Corp., the backdoor listing vehicle for the transaction.

The Aboitiz group said that the share-swap transaction signed by Hijos and Vivant last April 29 "misappropriated" some P170 million because of questionable valuations.

The Aboitiz group claimed that the Veco shares were traded at book value, while the Vivant shares were valued at a premium over its book value, thus reducing the holdings of Hijos' minority shareholders such as AEV and Aboitiz Power in Veco.

AEV owns about 46 percent of Hijos and roughly 30 percent of Veco, giving it a beneficial ownership of 54.5 percent in Veco.

Vivant, formerly PhilStar.com, invested in Veco by acquiring shares from Hijos, JEG Development Corp., MAI-I Resources Corp. and the Garcia family.

The Aboitiz group complained that the transaction was approved and implemented by the Garcia family, the majority shareholders of Hijos, over the stiff objections raised by the minority shareholders.

The Aboitiz group asked the court for P613 million in damages, a reversal of the share-swap transaction and the dissolution of Hijos de F. Escaño Inc., a privately-held company whose principal asset is its controlling stake in Veco.

Aboitiz said his group was in talks with the Garcias, but they had not gone to the extent of discussing an out-of-court settlement.

He said the group does not regret filing the petition, noting that it was a necessary move to protect their interests in Veco.

"It was something we really had to do," said AEV chief operating officer Erramon Aboitiz.

Local industries urge gov't to step up fight vs smuggling

By Michelle V. Remo

IN A bid to curb rampant smuggling, local industries have urged government to set up a separate body under the Bureau of Customs that would certify importers before they are allowed to engaged in trade.

The Federation of Philippine Industries proposed that the separate office, to be called the Importers Classification, Monitoring and Review Board, be composed of BoC personnel that would focus on the certification of importers as well as the monitoring of their activities.

Joseph Francia, secretary general of the Federation of Philippine Industries, said requiring importers to get prior certification from the proposed BoC body might help reduce the number of unscrupulous traders.

"There are instances when authorities try to go after importers who are allegedly engaged in illegal trade, but they sometimes fail to catch them because the suspects declared fake business addresses," Francia said in an interview.

Francia said the Departments of Finance and Trade and Industry have issued a directive as early as 1999 to create a monitoring body for importers.

The monitoring body, however, was not put into operation because of the DoF's failure to assign staff.

Aside from the ICMRB, the group also proposed that the BOC require exporters to send an "inward foreign shipping manifest" before any shipment is brought to the country's ports.

The manifest would contain the list of products included in each shipment.

Francia said getting the list of products before these are shipped into the country would help the BoC in its monitoring function.

The proposals were raised during the recent gathering of FPI members which was called to find ways to fight smuggling, which has adversely affected legitimate local businesses.

Risky Philippine bonds offer high returns

HONG KONG—Investors with strong nerves to withstand volatility could make a handsome gain by buying into Philippine sovereign dollar bonds, which have turned cheap compared to other emerging market assets.

The Philippines is the largest sovereign debt issuer in Asia outside Japan.

Philippine dollar bonds have delivered returns of 11.6 percent so far this year, the highest in Asia outside of Japan, according to the JPMorgan Asia Credit Index (Jaci).

ING Financial Markets in a recent report estimated that high yield Philippine credits could hand investors total returns of 9.4 percent over the next 12 months against a regional average of five percent.

"I think Philippine bond spreads are quite reasonable now compared with other emerging markets and similarly rated credits. But in the medium term there's concern about the political issues because of the elections," said Ben Yuen, head of Asian fixed income at First State Investments.

Spreads on the Philippine sovereign bonds have widened by between 48 basis points (bps) and 74 bps in the past one month on political infighting before next year's presidential elections.

Benchmark Philippine sovereign dollar bonds due 2014 are currently quoted at 457 bps over Treasuries, about 72 bps wider than a month earlier.

The Philippine sovereign dollar bonds underperformed in October on reports that film star Fernando Poe Jr., widely known as FPJ, might challenge President Macapagal-Arroyo in the polls.

Analysts say FPJ's lack of political and economic background should he choose to run could lead some investors to limit their exposure to Philippine assets.

"I think it has gotten increasingly cheap relative to other emerging market assets. We should see in the short-term some recovery in the spreads in light of expectations of better fiscal numbers," said Johanna Chua, sovereign credit analyst at Citigroup.

Market watchers say all eyes are on the October fiscal deficit numbers, which are expected to be unveiled this week. *Reuters*

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Benguet eyes Baguio potable water contract

By Christine A. Gaylican

MINING firm Benguet Corp. has expressed interest to bid for the contract to provide Baguio City's growing requirement for potable water.

Benguet Corp. president Philip Romualdez said in an interview that Benguet could increase the water supply in Baguio City from a minimum of 110,000 cubic meters per day to a high of 300,000 cu.m. per day, which should be enough even during summer when tourists flock to the Summer Capital.

"We are up to the challenge of supplying water to the 250,000 residents of the city, which actually doubles during tourist arrival season. We are now just waiting for the terms of reference. We are happy to bid for the project," Romualdez said.

Benguet plans to source the water from its reservoir in Itogon, Benguet.

Benguet vice president for business development Leopoldo Sison III said Baguio City's water district was almost finished with laying the distribution pipes and Benguet would be ready to supply the water.

The construction of the pipes was financed by the Australian government, which gave the Baguio City government a $15-million grant to prepare a masterplan to improve the city's water distribution system.

"The problem is where to tap the water and we can supply that," Sison told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Benguet diversified into water distribution six years ago when it provided water to its host community in Itogon, Benguet.

Benguet also provides water to the residents of Kalinlangan town in Bukidnon.

Benguet, however, continues to explore for minerals. One of its most recent finds is a nickel field in Zambales.

HSBC sees 50% rise in credit cards in '04

By Elena R. Torrijos

HSBC, one of the largest foreign banks in the country, sees the number of its credit cards increasing by as much as 50 percent next year from the current 300,000 as it adds on features to its card to capture a bigger slice of the market.

HSBC senior vice president James Benoit said at the sidelines of the relaunch of HSBC's RED MasterCard that the growth of its Red MasterCard and Mabuhay Miles Visa co-branded credit card with Philippine Airlines has been strong despite the sluggish economic growth.

Benoit said the pattern indicated the potential for growth of cards that focus on a particular set of consumer needs.

HSBC unveiled last Friday new features to its RED MasterCard, a for-women-only credit card that is also accepted in more than 29 million establishments globally, to strengthen its hold on the big women's market.

"What we're saying is women's lives and needs are very complex and we have a card that can match their requirements," Benoit said.

Starting this month, the card will offer a zero percent instalment plan covering a wide range of fashion and lifestyle stores frequented by women.

Store Specialists Inc., the chain of stores carrying the world's most famous brands such as Prada, Ralph Lauren, Gucci, Nine West, Lush, Episode and Bally leads the roster of participating establishments.

RED MasterCard holders can also avail themselves of instalment packages in other stores like SM Appliance Center, Sogo, Ambiance One and Maco.

In addition to the instalment plan, RED MasterCard holders can get special discounts from The Spa, Original Skin by UMV, Urban Spa and Discovery Spa.

They can also receive free or discounted feminine-health consultation, dental prophylaxis and cosmetic and re-constructive surgery consultations at Healthway Medical Clinics.

HSBC, which entered the credit card business in the Philippines five years ago, has a roster of credit cards ranging from the regular to high-end Visa and MasterCard credit cards to the niche cards such as RED and PAL cards.

REAL ESTATE

E-mail: pr_real_estate@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

Developers defend position on land use bill

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

> A vigorous mass housing will create more jobs and livelihood prospects, particularly for the poorer sector within urban and rural areas

By Charles E Buban

AS THE COUNTRY strives to find solutions to the sprawling pattern of land development that is leapfrogging across the landscape, promising control measures, among them providing for a rational, holistic and just allocation, utilization, management and development of the country's land resources as proposed in the pending bill—the National Land Use Act of the Philippines—have been welcomed but with caution by land developers.

Various land developers reasoned out that basic shelter under the mass housing program of the government must be given just and equitable emphasis and priority as that of food security and Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

"This is one reason we have defended our position before Congress as they deliberated House Bill 6056, and we will do the same now that the bill has been elevated to the Senate (Senate Bill 1944)," informed Marilu Alferez, national president of the Subdivision and Housing Developers Association.

Just allocation

As her group recognized the intentions of the bill's general policy and principle, Alferez believes it has given too much support for food security and priority for the CARP to the disadvantage of other sectors including shelter and housing.

"What land developers would also like is for it to benefit our farmers since, after all, they also deserve decent housing, apart from wanting to have access to medical care, education and other basic services," Alferez reasoned out.

"In the case of mass housing, our farmers, in most cases, benefit from having an added source of income whenever they are employed as carpenters, masons, tinsmiths, plumbers, electricians or ordinary laborers during off-planting periods.

Stimulating the economy

SHDA chair Jesus Atencio said that since this country has 4.5-million homeless Filipino families, the government would need to support a massive housing production program.

"A vigorous mass housing sector will create significant stimulation of our economy, activating at least 60 other industries directly related to construction and many more sectors indirectly," explained Atencio.

He also believes a vigorous mass housing will create more jobs and livelihood opportunities particularly for the poorer sector within urban and rural areas of the country.

Institutionalizing land use

The bill proposes that it also become the policy of the country to institutionalize land use and physical planning as a mechanism for identifying, determining and evaluating alternative land use patterns.

This shall be supported by a national land use allocation system as well as a land use resource information and management system.

Because of this, land developers urged for a modification of the comprehensive land use plan (CLUP) into something more versatile so it may assist in fast-tracking national economic growth and development.

"The CLUP must be much more than just a mechanism for allocating the country's land resources to its various uses," Atencio said.

CLUP as tool

The CLUP must become a tool that will serve to reduce bureaucratic red tape, redundancies and cost of doing business with the government, Atencio suggested.

"So that local government units (LGUs) may maximize harnessing private sector investments in various development projects," he added.

Alferez also suggested that the CLUP must be utilized as an LGU-wide, master-planning process to be initiated and undertaken by the LGUs involving the active participation of all concerned national government agencies particularly the departments of Agriculture, Agrarian Reform and Environment and Natural Resources.

Both SHDA officers believe this will achieve the following objectives:

- **The CLUP serving as a mechanism for LGU-wide land reclassification and land conversion process.** For example, whenever the type of land development proposed is consistent with the zoning and land use per the CLUP, case to case land reclassification by LGUs and land conversion involving the DA and the DAR should no longer be required.
- **The CLUP serving as a mechanism for LGU-wide environmental study, evaluation and certification process undertaken by regional offices of the DENR in aid of the CLUP process of the LGU.** For example, if a housing projects is located in the residential zone as designated by the CLUP, it should no longer be subject to the DENR's case-to-case application for and issuance of an environmental compliance certificate.

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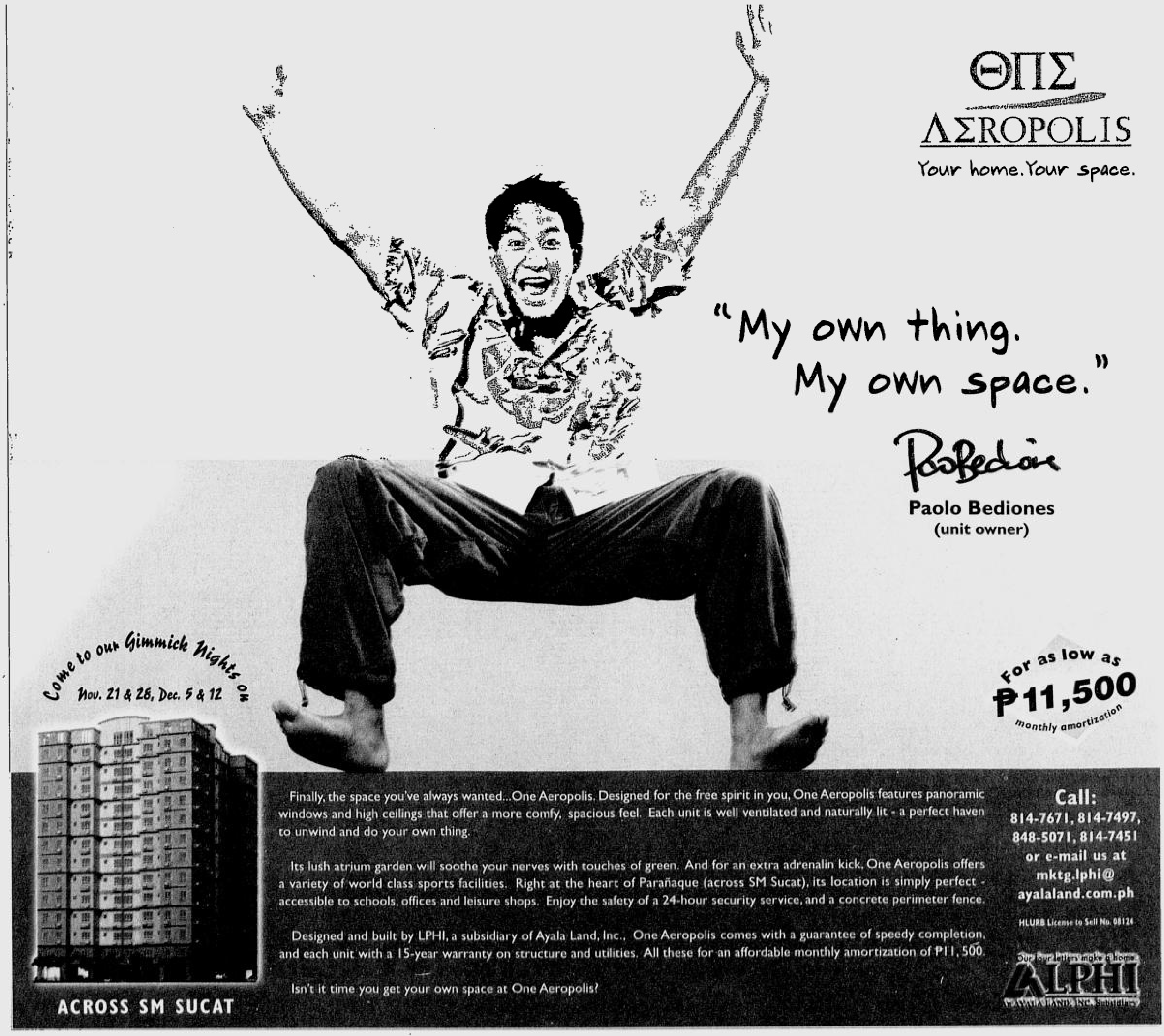

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DATE palms have become the signature of Filinvest's high-end developments as seen at Filinvest Corporate City.

Filinvest rallies developers toward a 'Green Evolution'

GREEN Evolution at Ciudad de Calamba. From left are Winifred H. Lim, planning and engineering department head for future projects; Arnulfo P. Canaria, project group head, PG-11, Ciudad de Calamba; and Jimmy Roque, planning and engineering department head for Corte Bella projects.

THE COMPANY which owns and develops vast tracts of land for development into residential, commercial and mixed use has come out with a strong call to support the environment.

"Since our investments are mostly anchored on land and gifts of the earth, we believe it is our social responsibility to protect and preserve the environment within which we build habitats for the community," says Josephine Gotianun-Yap, scion of the Gotianun family of Filinvest.

Green Evolution

Filinvest Land Inc. and its sister company Filinvest Alabang Inc. have instituted a program called "Green Evolution."

"We call it a "green evolution" because it is in that concept that we see our commitment growing as our community of projects grows into the 21st century," says Joji Yap.

The first major investment undertaken by the FAI was in the greening of Filinvest Corporate City in Alabang. According to Yap, around 10,000 trees were used to create the park effect which prevails at the FCC. Majestic date palm trees which line the avenues have become a Filinvest signature. Their upmarket residential village in Biñan, Laguna—Brentville International—carries the same landscape discipline.

Ecological consciousness

In 2002, FLI introduced Nusa Dua, a modern residential farm estate at Tanza, Cavite. This alternative lifestyle concept complements the company's mission to raise more ecological consciousness.

Says FLI vice chair Andrew Gotianun: "It's a good way of providing urban families with a second home which is built on land propagation. Farming is nature-conscious and is a healthy way of life."

Recently, several Filinvest officials engaged themselves in tree-planting activities at four residential projects—Woodville, Ciudad de Calamba, Crystal Aire and West Parc. The projects designed tree lanes and tree parks dedicated to the Philippines' endangered species and conservation areas.

Soon, FLI will launch a major township project anchored on an ecological platform.

DATE palms are also found at Brentville in Biñan, Laguna.

1322: There's safety in these numbers

THE BUILDERS of the country's tallest residential building, 1322 Roxas Boulevard, did not spare any expense and effort to guarantee a home that is synonymous to safety. A magnificent 57-story building that boasts of having not only the most luxurious homes by the bay, but also of being one of the country's safest edifice.

The builders of 1322 definitely had safety in mind during the planning and construction of this landmark building. Hand in hand with the world's top designers and consultants in the construction and architecture field, 1322 is definitely one of the safest buildings in the country.

Soil testing

When Moldex Land decided to erect a 57-story luxurious building facing the Manila Bay, it began its first steps in ensuring the safety of its future tenants by conducting a soil-testing program.

Dr. Salvador Reyes, the country's best foundation specialist, and PhilGeo Analytics worked hand in hand to determine the bearing capacity of the soil and the depth of the piles needed to be installed.

Foundation design

Moldex then commissioned Aromin & Sy Associates, the country's most expert foundation designer, to design the foundation. Then, the design was carried out by DM Consunji Inc. together with Bachy Soletanche, a Hong Kong-based French company that is an expert builder of buildings by the sea.

Since 1322 is near the bay, the builders had to go through tremendous efforts to make sure that the foundation is well-built.

Building the dream

After the excavation and the building of the foundation, 1322's twin towers were constructed.

A team of international experts were hired as consultants to help the local contractors build the tallest residential building as safe as possible for its future homeowners.

All the recommendations of the experts were followed strictly, with no downgrading in terms of materials or production. No expense was spared to ensure luxury, safety and security.

1322 has been built to withstand the strongest earthquake and typhoons in conformity with the international standards and following the uniform building code.

Curtain wall technology

1322 is equipped with curtain wall technology.

Curtain walls refer to the floor-to-ceiling glass windows on all sides of the building. They add beauty and elegance in any structure, but they have to be thoroughly tested to be safe. J.A. Shillinglaw Inc., a Hong Kong-based company, was 1322's consultant in curtain wall technology.

The curtain walls were constructed using a 12.77 mm-thick, laminated, gold glass. The standard thickness of glass used in buildings is 6 mm, however, Moldex opted for more than twice the standard thickness for precautionary measures. J.A. Shillinglaw also imported aluminum billets, which surrounded the glass for support.

Fire prevention devices

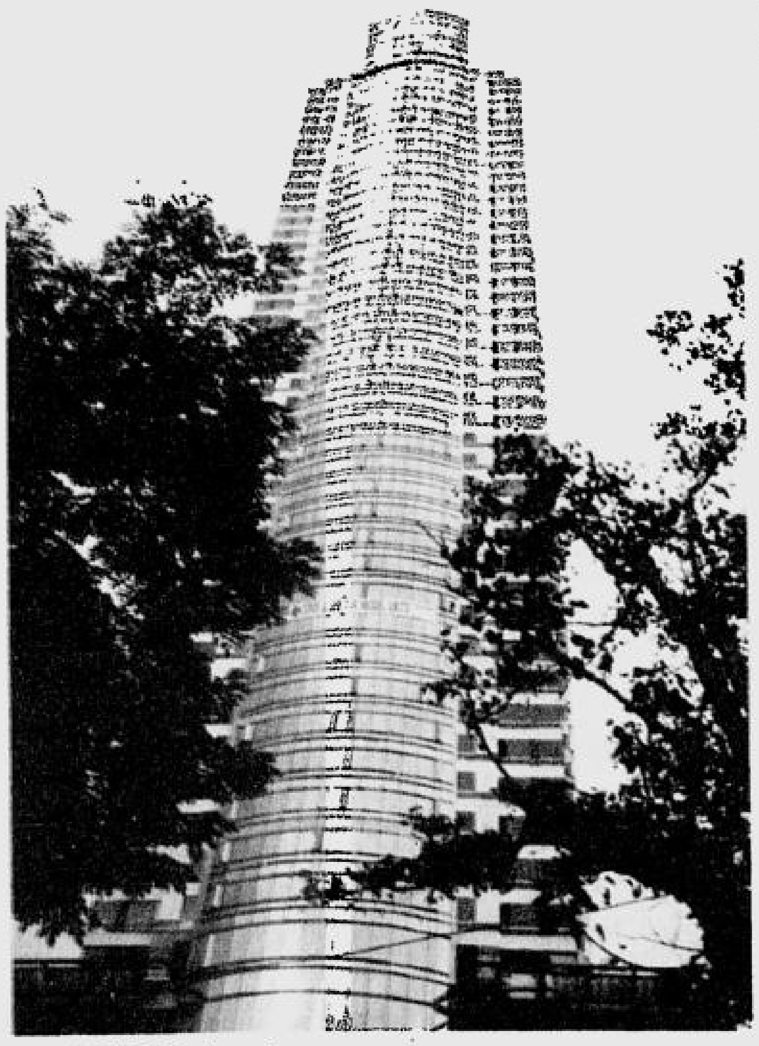
1322 is definitely one of the hottest picks among high-rise luxury in the metropolis. However, what's not hot is having no protection from the intense heat of fire in case of emergencies. And that is why Moldex assures everyone through 1322, that the height of luxury is worry-free!

Rolf Jensen & Associates Inc. provided fire protection consulting services for Moldex Land Inc. in the units of 1322. It developed an overall fire protection approach that coordinated with the fire protection systems of 1322.

The scope of the services provided by Rolf Jensen included structural fire resistance, fire suppression criteria, smoke control concepts, fire alarm criteria, exiting, interior finishes approaches to occupancy separations, elevator requirements, emergency power and other features unique to the building.

1322 is now equipped with a smoke evacuation fan, which sucks out the smoke and exhausts it to the roof deck, therefore preventing suffocation among tenants in case of fire. All fire exits are pressurized and all units have smoke and heat detectors, plus all front doors are fire-rated which means that these have higher resistance to fire.

There really is no price for safety. And that is why Moldex Land has ensured that 1322 will not only be the ultimate in luxury, but also the best in safety and security.



1322 ROXAS Boulevard

Belt Collins landscapes Shang Grand Tower

IMAGINE living in a tower—high up there where the view is fantastic, far away from the chaos and confusion down below. Ensconced in lush landscapes and luxurious surroundings, this is paradise on earth come true. This is living at The Shang Grand Tower.

The Shang Grand Tower is the latest property development project of The Kuok Group, one of Asia Pacific's most respected conglomerates, noted for its multi-awarded Shangri-La group of hotels.

Backed up by The Kuok Group's extensive industry experience and expertise, expect The Shang Grand Tower to create major real estate waves.

In the true tradition of Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, The Shang Grand Tower will be a Manhattan-type skyscraper standing tall in Makati's central business district. A collaboration between Hong Kong-based Palmer and Turner and renowned Filipinos Recio & Casas Architects, the design of The Shang Grand Tower reflects a soothing mauve hue, verdant tints glinting bright sunny rays like a diamond in the polish.

Landscaping consultation was provided by Belt Collins, international specialists in landscape architecture, land planning, urban design, resort engineering, environmental consulting, physical planning, and theme park/water park design. In the Philippines, Belt Collins is the same group responsible for the panoramic aspects of Shangri-La hotels in Edsa and Makati, and the Shangri-La Mactan Resort in Cebu.

Known for its creativity and innovations, there is no "set" Belt Collins style.

"Our landscape architects, environmentalists and engineers like to make every project different," Anthony Hui, Belt Collins Design Group's president and Belt Collins Hong Kong managing director explains.

"We aim for a lasting design, one that will grow better with time. After all, increased value for a property means increased value for the owner."

Located at the triangular corner of Dela Rosa, Perea and Nieva streets in the heart of Legaspi Village, this 250-unit posh residential address is a few minutes' walk from the Glorietta and Greenbelt malls.

Eternal Gardens Memorial Park sports new look

ETERNAL Gardens Memorial Park Corp. announces the creation of a new image of its memorial park in Baesa, Quezon City.

Planned and executed by One Design Consultancy Corp., the entrance gate and fence present a contemporary postmodern design inspired by ancient columns where the statue of transfiguration, designed and executed by national artist Dean Napoleon Abueva, has been transferred.

After a seven-month period of facelifting, the towering 43-feet transfiguration of Jesus Christ has been moved from the ground level now atop a new two-story structure at the main gate at 75 feet high projecting heavenward, giving a floating impression to onlookers.

EGMPC executive vice president and general manager Manuel R. Cortez said in an interview, "the improved façade of the park has virtually transformed the former court of transfiguration into an open area of 4,000 sq m to be converted into family estate blocks for mausoleums, which are now in the market."

This is good news to everyone vying to own memorial property from Eternal Gardens.

The park's management also provides construction services in the building of memorial structures and other materials needed for interment.

Palafox only Asian to finish Harvard's AMDP

WORLD-CLASS architect and urban planner Felino Palafox Jr. recently completed the Advanced Management Development Program (AMDP) for real estate entrepreneurs and senior managers at the Harvard University's Graduate School of Design in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.

The only Asian in his class composed of real estate developers, architects and urban planners from the world's four continents, Palafox is likewise the first Filipino to take up the course. He is the principal architect and founder, urban planner and managing partner of Palafox Associates, which according to the London-based World Architecure Magazine, currently ranks first in the Philippines and Southeast Asia and 122nd in the world.

Highly acclaimed paper

As a requirement for the course, he presented among others, a highly acclaimed paper titled "Manila Metropolis 2020—Manila Bay-Pacific Coast Metropolitan Region: Concept Plan 2020."

In his paper, Palafox cited that in 1905, Manila was planned by Daniel Burnham for a population of 800,000. However, he said that in the year 2000, Metro Manila was one of the 20 largest megacities in the world, with the highest population growth rate (of 60 births per hour) among the world's megacities, the population of which is expected to reach 20 million before the year 2020.

He pointed out that Metro Manila, strategically located in the Asia Pacific, one of the fastest-growing region in the world, can be an urban laboratory for the mistakes made and lessons (to be) learned in urban planning and real estate development.

"Metro Manila's Asian, European and American heritage in a developing country setting makes it uniquely different. Some of the best practices elsewhere in the world can be appropriately applied to address the country's urban issues and challenges and to make Metropolitan Manila more livable and globally competitive," Palafox maintained.

Strategy

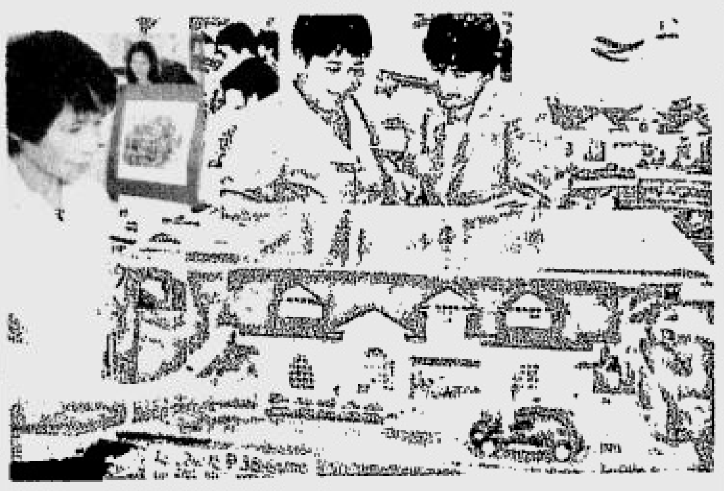
His paper puts up a strategy which takes advantage of Metro Manila's locational advantage nationally and globally. Part of his concept plan is the development among others, of urban development corridors and clustering growth centers like the former US military bases at Subic and Clark and the opening up of new gateways on the Pacific Ocean coastline, to spur new investments in the region and development opportunities in the inner cities and create jobs and economic opportunities especially for the urban poor.

Palafox expressed optimism that his concept plan will provide the urban vision and call to action for more progressive policies, plans and programs, create an investment climate and implement more pragmatic laws for the development of the Manila Bay-Pacific Coast Metropolitan Region in the 21st century.

Very impressive record

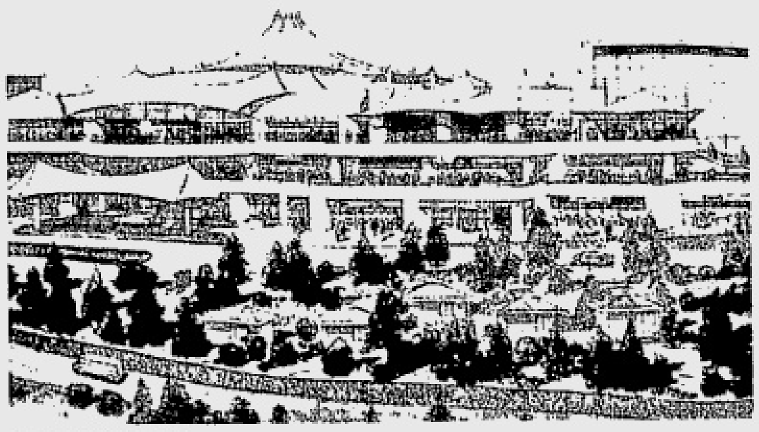
Palafox holds a very impressive record in the field of architecture, urban planning and design, having completed the architectural designs of over 3.6-million sq m of building floor area and master-planned over 100 communities covering more than 800,000 hectares of land area in 14 countries.

He has lectured and addressed international conferences on architecture and urban planning in Harvard University and Massachusetts, USA; in Toronto, Canada; Shanghai, China; and Singapore. He also has actively participated in other international conferences in North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.



EMPIRE EAST CAVITE PROJECTS

Leading housing developer Empire East Properties Inc. is exhibiting its Governor's Hills and Sunrise Hills community projects at the first level of SM Manila up to Nov. 25 and at the food court level of Duty Free Philippines in Parañaque until Dec. 10. On display are scale models of the Mexican-Californian-inspired single-detached and duplex units and European-themed triplex units of Governor's Hills as well as the triplex units of Sunrise Hills.



SM CITY Baguio

SM City Baguio opens Friday

SM CITY Baguio, the 16th SM Supermall, will be open to the public on Nov. 21.

Strategically located on a 79,763-square-meter property at the site of the former Pines Hotel on Session Road, it is within a stroll from some of the city's most popular destinations: the central market, Burnham Park, Sunshine Park and the City Hall.

Because of its scenic mountainous terrain, cool climate, breathtaking, natural beauty and palm trees, Baguio is known as the summer capital of the country. Over a million tourists visit Baguio each year; and apart from tourism, commercial activities and retail services drive the local economy.

The supermall will serve customers in Baguio and in the northern Luzon areas.

SM City Baguio will have 106,231 sq m and six levels of great shopping, leisure and entertainment.

Designed to capture the breathtaking beauty of the city of pines, SM City Baguio's construction team includes Design International, a foreign design consultant for the mall; Jose Siao Ling and Associates, architects; New Golden City, general contractors; and DA Abcede and Associates, proejct manager.

Both Baguio residents and tourists can look forward to shopping at the SM Department Store, the trendsetter and innovator that has become part of the lives of many Filipinos; and the SM Supermarket, which combines exciting merchandise concepts with the latest supermarketing technology.

The supermall will have SM mainstays like the SM Appliance Center, ACE Hardware, Watsons, Our Home, Sports Central, Surplus Shop and Toy Kingdom as well as fashion boutiques, jewelry and home stores, novelty shops and service outlets. It will have computer and telecom stores for the cyber generation.

Eating out options include good food... fast at the SM Food Court as well as an exciting mix of international food chains like Pizza Hut, Wendy's, KFC and Shakey's; local food chains like Jollibee, Chowking, Goldilocks and Greenwich; as well as cool restos like Tokyo Tokyo, Kitaro and Teriyaki Boy.

The mall will also have four state-of-the-art cinemas with a total seating capacity of 2,656 as well as amusement centers. In a city where parking is precious, SM City Baguio will have 800 parking slots.

Financial strategies after buying your home

By Alexis A. Acacio

IN THE HOMEBUYING process that you may have just experienced—searching for the perfect location, preparing your finances, talking to your lender, negotiating for the best price, closing in the contract and finally moving in, you may think that the hard part is over and the good times are to come. This can only be partly true for you will now have to face the reality of making the monthly payments.

After your house blessing attended by your closest friends and family and being way above the clouds, you are now back to the ground in which you would now have to pay the deadly monthly amortization, unless of course you have paid your house in cash or inherited it at least.

BUILDING DREAMS

Owning a home requires a lot of responsibilities. This include maintaining it, paying the association dues with the neighborhood or the condominium association, paying the real property taxes and of course, paying the monthly mortgage payments on time. Here are some financial strategies that will make your home ownership a little easier.

- **Save, save and save**

Since about a third of your monthly income will now go to the mortgage payments, you now have to be extra careful in saving. It may now mean giving up the "It's Friday, Lets Eat Out" habit of yours that you have been doing for the last five years. Analyze your spending patterns and you might be surprised to see that you are spending P10,000 a month just on eating out.

Remember that you are not just saving for your home payments, you must also save for your medical expenses, tuition for the children, and even other debt repayments. The idea here is to be a responsible payer and you can only be one if you have adequate savings.

- **Delay other purchases**

You may be so attracted to the latest model of the family van that just came out of the market and it would be perfect for the coming holiday season—but the old van works just fine. Having a home and paying for it regularly may mean not buying that new car and giving up that trip to Europe. Set your priorities straight.

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

- **Always have an emergency fund**

Unexpected, large expenses are a fact of life. These situations include accidents and sudden illnesses. Remember that you also have a spike of expenses twice a year—in June when you have to pay tuition fees and December when you have to give gifts and party a lot. Having an emergency fund would cushion the impact of these unexpected events that may come along the way. A good rule to follow is that you should have at least six months worth of payments as reserve.

- **Buy fire insurance**

Insurance can never prevent your house from being eaten up by a fire but can protect you from any adverse financial problems should your house burn down. If you are on a mortgage, a fire insurance is sometimes included but if it is not, make sure that you have one.

- **Build a good credit rating**

Do your best to pay on time every obligation that you have. If you do this without any default, you will be able to build a very good credit rating and would not pose any problem for you should you borrow again in the future. Lenders always look at your ability to pay on time.

- **Always search for a better deal**

Every year, calculate the amount that you have to pay including the principal and the interest. If you have been paying a high interest rate, then looking for another lender can really bring down your monthly payments. Some banks offer you a rebate when you transfer the loan to their account. Be careful though to check out the real costs since there are transfer costs of transferring a mortgage with another lender.

- **Prepare for other homeownership expenses**

These other expenses include real property taxes on the land and the improvements, insurance for the home and maintenance for the regular upkeep like termite protection and painting.

- **Be a good worker**

Being able to meet the monthly payments will mostly depend on that regular income stream that you receive every month. If you are an employee, do work hard and be an honest one. Remember that once you get that salary increase, your payments will come out to be easier. If you are self-employed and running your own business, make sure that you can face the ups and downs that naturally come with it.

Being healthy is also a part of being a good worker so try your best to keep fit always.

Final Note. Our homes will probably be the biggest purchase that we will have in our entire life. And for most of us, we have to finance it through a mortgage which means that we have to pay in a set amount for the next 10 years or so. Home ownership requires not only a lot of sacrifice but also that we are financially responsible. But the rewards of having our own home will surely outweigh the obligations that it now demands.

(E-mail the author at aaacacio@pacific.net.ph.)

IT solutions for construction professionals at PhilConstruct

IN AN INDUSTRY where speed is important, the lack of a viable system often results in a company's failure to gather and disseminate correct information and deliver it to the right people.

On a larger scale, the advent of trade liberalization demands that professionals upgrade their skills to conform to global standards and remain competitive in the world market.

"When the Philippines opens up because of globalization and liberalization, borders disappear, and we will have to blend with the global system. We have to prepare for that eventuality," says Philippine Constructors Association (PCA) president Emilio Tumbucon.

Such issues, global trends and innovations in construction, were discussed in the series of seminars collectively known as TechnoForum, which was held in conjunction with last week's PhilConstruct 2003 exhibit from Nov. 13 to 16 at the World Trade Center in Pasay City.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, who counts on the support of the construction sector in her drive to make the Philippines a "Strong Republic," took time out to make the rounds of the exhibit on opening day. Trade Secretary Manuel "Mar" Roxas III led the opening and ribbon cutting ceremonies.

Latest technologies

The seminar series updated practitioners on the latest construction technologies, "from Fidic contracts to government electronic procurement rules to modern bridge designs to computerized tools to equipment maintenance."

On the other hand, some of the newest IT tools available to construction professionals, including the Microsoft Business Solutions Solomon IV, the Asyst accounting system, the BayanTrade eBid and Polycom videoconferencing, were showcased during the expo.

Financial suite

Microsoft Business Solutions Solomon IV is a financial suite that allows the professional to manage all the phases of a project-planning, scheduling, status review, expense capture, profitability analysis and billing.

Four Solomon modules are available: financial series, distribution series, project series, manufacturing and field service.

Software Farm International's ASYST accounting system is an easy-to-navigate, all-in-one workhorse that will enable the professional to monitor the company's operation and financial status, as well as store important data for safekeeping through its six modules: sales, purchase, inventory, accounts payable, accounts receivable and general ledger.

Asyst, aside from providing solutions in cost management, inventory management and account/customer management, also takes care of archiving and bookkeeping.

Intricate processes

The intricate processes of bid structuring, selection and qualification of suppliers, preparation and submission of tenders, and bid awarding are made painless with BayanTrade's BT-eBid. The brainchild of blue chip companies Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Ayala Corp., Benpres Holdings Corp., JG Summit Holdings, PLDT and United Laboratories, BT-eBid promises true market price discovery, process efficiency and transparency as its chief benefits.

Polycom, on the other hand, frees busy professionals and executives from the hassles of commuting or traveling through its array of videoconferencing systems. It has five audio-video and three audio-only models to meet a company's particular needs and budget.

Trade show coverage

With its more than 5,000 products and building solutions, PhilConstruct 2003 has covered every imaginable construction material—from building shells to home interiors to ground technology solutions.

PhilConstruct, the country's most comprehensive and longest running construction trade show, was managed by L.A. Ducut and Co. Inc., and sponsored by Cemex Marine, Boysen, Lafarge Cement, Bosch Power Tools, Davies Paints, Italit Pipes and the INQUIRER, while TechnoForum 2003 was sponsored by The Brain Computer Inc. and Scantek.

Financing realty investment lecture

TO KEEP UP with competition or avoid investment failures, real estate developers, investors and professionals must cope with new financial and management concepts that continuously evolve due to radical changes in the financial market and other factors.

Although real estate finance is not an exact science especially when subjective analysis, experience and creativity sometimes work, still its basic fundamentals should be learned first by prospective investors, borrowers, lenders and newcomers before venturing into real estate investments.

As part of its continuing CEP lecture series, the Urban Institute of Real Estate will conduct a lecture on Fundamentals of Real Estate Finance and Investment Analysis on Nov. 22, from 1:30 to 6 p.m. at the Asian Institute of Management Conference Center, Benavidez corner Trasiera Streets, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Interested parties may call the Urban Institute at 681-0928 or e-mail urbanet@pacific.net.ph.

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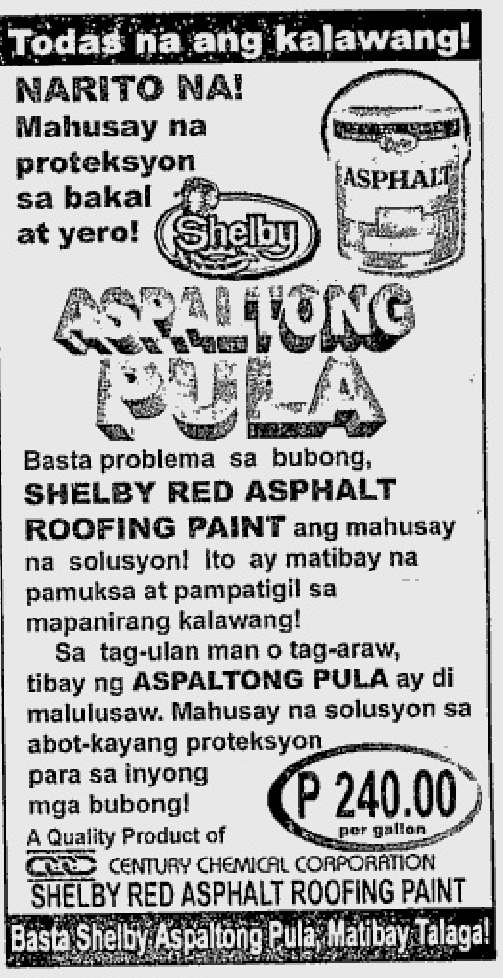

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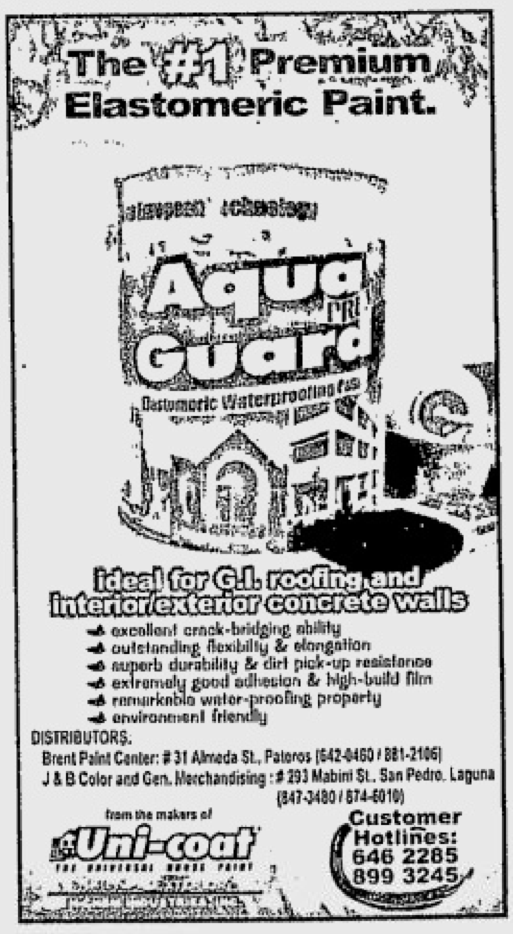

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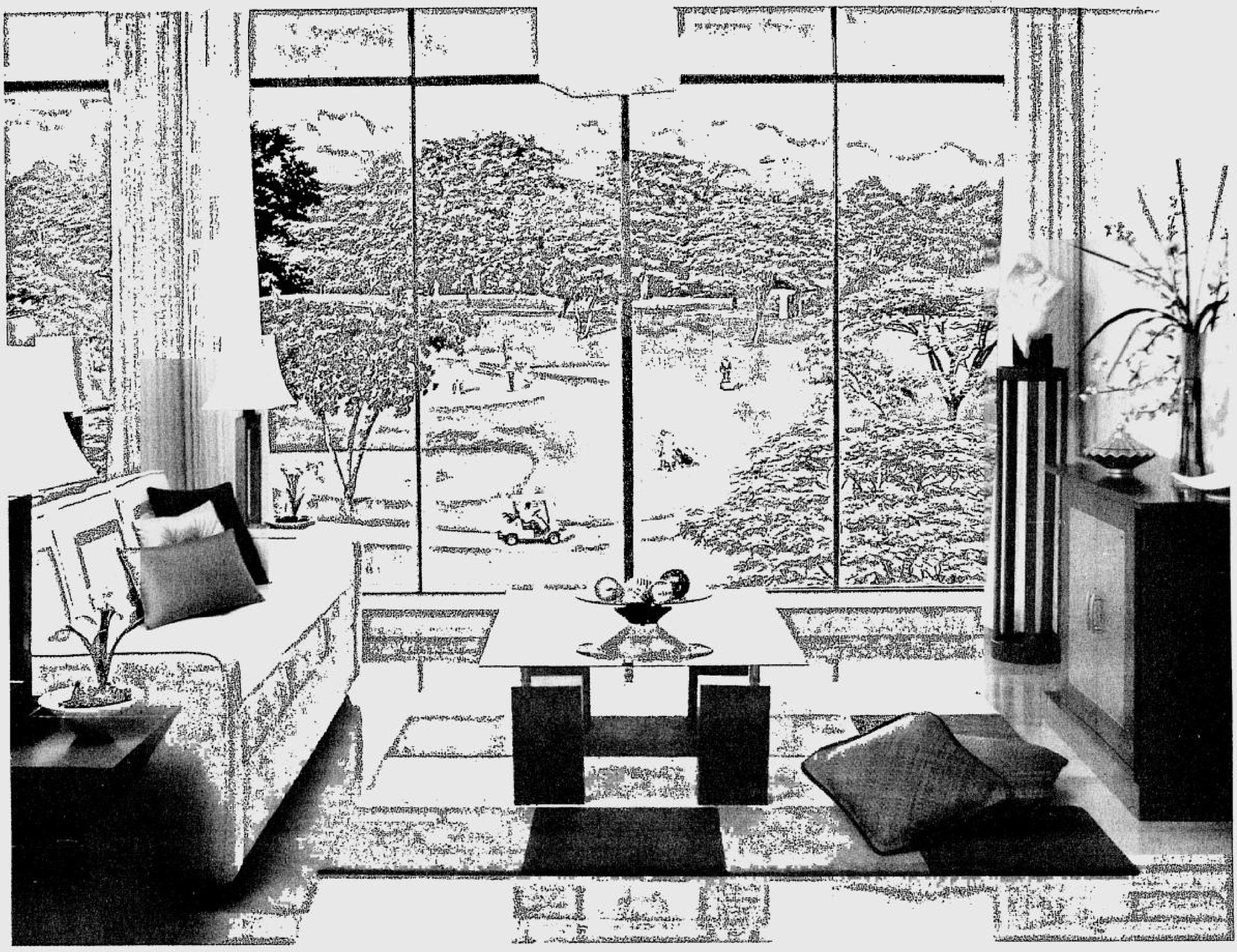
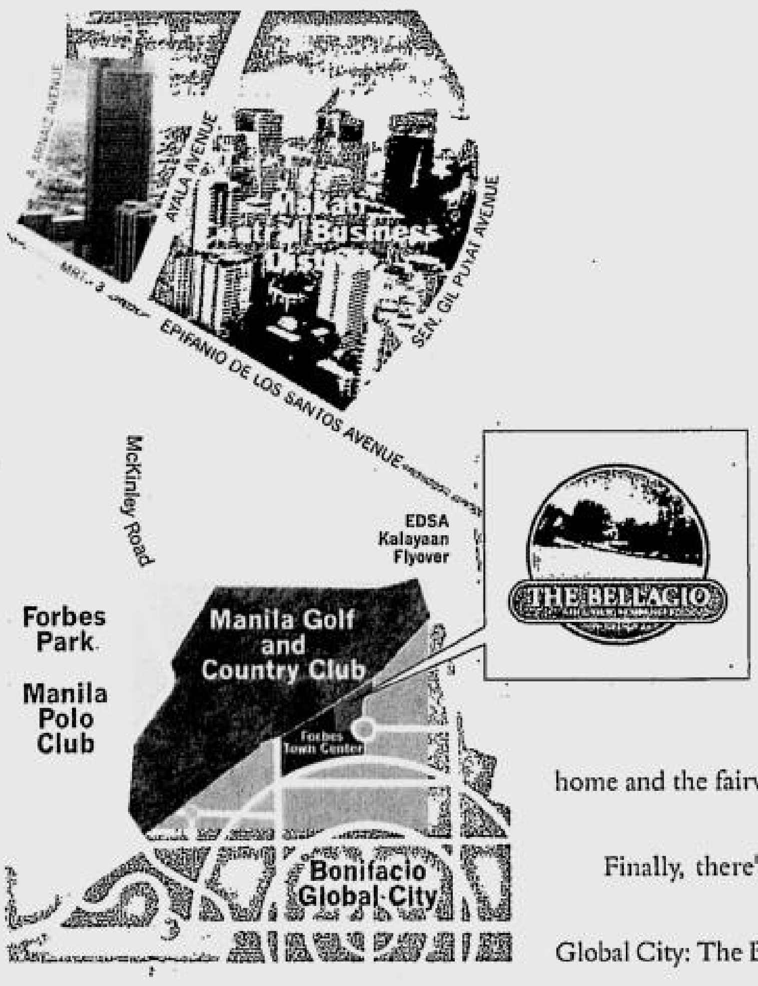


THE BELLAGIO
GOLF VIEW RESIDENCES

Fronting Manila Golf & Country Club



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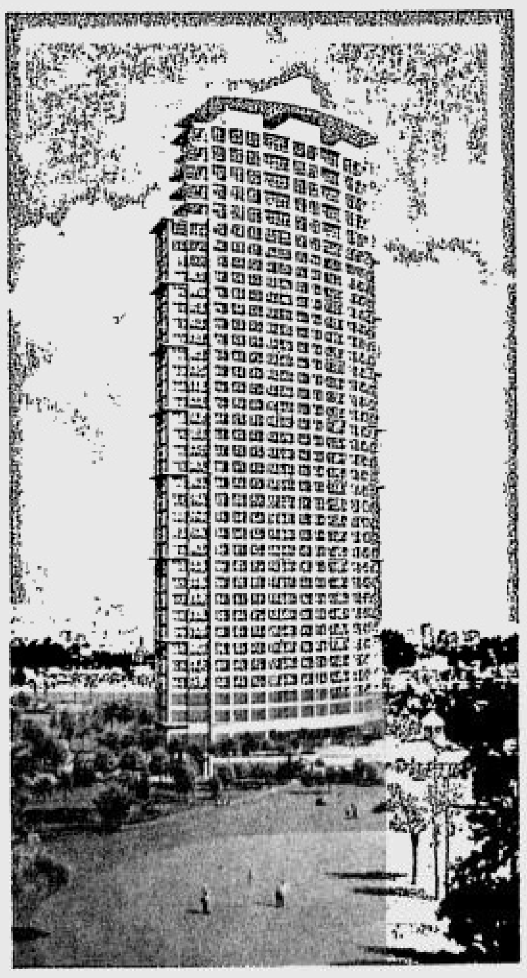

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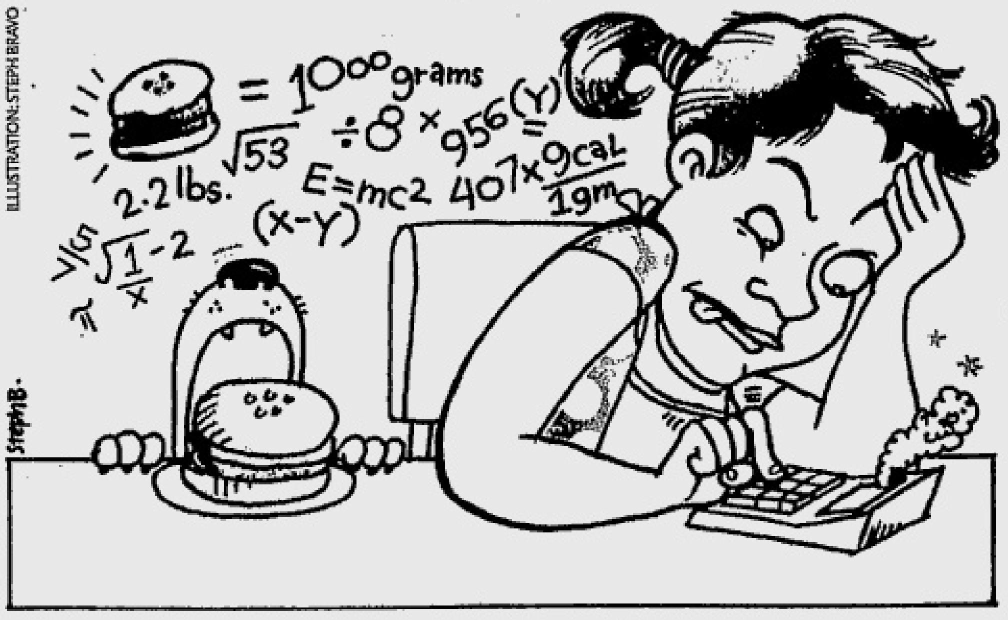

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Calorific facts

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

A WEIGHT-LOSS doctor e-mailed me in response to my column two weeks ago titled "The mystery of metabolism." I had written that 3,500 calories were equal to 1 pound of fat. This is a commonly accepted figure found in almost all nutrition, health and fitness books.

He wrote, "It actually takes approximately 4,000 calories to deposit or burn 1 pound of fat and not 3,500 only. Here are the actual computations. Given: 1,000 g = 2.2 pounds, and 1 g of fat = 9 calories. Then: 1 pound of fat x 1,000 g / 2.2 pounds = 454 g of fat, and 454 g x 9 calories / 1 g = 4,086 calories."

There is a big difference between 3,500 calories and 4,086 calories. What is the correct figure?

The doctor's computation is logical and correct because 1 g of fat is equal to 9 calories, but 3,500 calories is also correct because of other factors. Here is the explanation from Dr. Patrick Bird of the University of Florida's College of Health and Human Performance.

"When we burn fat or other nutrients, heat is produced, which is measured in calories. Each gram of fat generates 9 calories, and 454 g equals 1 pound. But a pound of fat is not all fat. It's about 10 percent water. All of our body tissues—fat, muscle, bone, skin—contain some water. And water has zero calories.

"In addition, not all the nutrients we eat are completely absorbed from the digestive tract to meet metabolic needs. In the case of fat, roughly 5 percent is eliminated in the feces. This 10 percent water content and 5 percent non-absorbed fat account for the 15 percent difference between the calculated 4,086 calories and the actual 3,500 calories in a pound of fat."

The doctor's e-mail got me to thinking about how people are always talking about calories but don't really know what a calorie is, where it comes from, how it is measured, etc. So here are some calorific facts.

What is a calorie?

A calorie is unit of heat. According to physicist Paul Doherty, a calorie is the heat flow needed to raise the temperature of 1 g of water by 1° C (1.8° F).

> 'How many calories do you burn just trying to understand what a calorie is?'

A calorie in physics is different from a calorie in nutrition. Doherty explains that 1 food calorie (which should technically be spelled with a capital C) is 1,000 times bigger than 1 physicist's calorie (spelled with a small c). In other words, a food calorie is actually a kilocalorie (Kcal). It is the amount of heat needed to raise the temperature of 1 kg of water by 1° C. Sometimes, the physics calorie is called a small calorie while the food calorie is called a big or large calorie. Whew! No wonder one website starts its definition of calories with an ice-breaker question: How many calories do you burn just trying to understand what a calorie is?

So now you know that a cup of rice has 220,000 physics calories or, in food terms, 220 Calories or 220 kilocalories. Since it is difficult for the general public to deal with all those zeros, the term "calorie" spelled with a small "c" is usually used when referring to food or exercise. In a nutrition label, it will appear as "cals" or "Kcal." So there is no further confusion for the rest of this article, the word "calorie" refers to a food calorie, Calorie or kilocalorie.

If you buy European or Australian food products, you may have noticed the word "joules" or "kilojoules." A joule is the metric system's equivalent of a calorie. One food calorie is equivalent to 4,184 joules. In his article, "Counting calories," Doherty notes, "In the United States, advertisers can claim a can of diet soda has "less than 1 calorie." In Australia, the equivalent statement just doesn't sound as impressive: "less than 5,000 joules." On the other hand, candy advertisements in Australia say you'll "get a megajoule jolt from our candy bar!"

Here's more food or calories for thought. According to Julia Layton of the "How Stuff Works" website, we tend to associate calories with food, but they apply to anything containing energy. For example, 4 liters of gasoline contains about 31 million calories. She says, "You could drive a car 35 kilometers on the calories in 217 Big Macs."

Where do calories come from?

Physiologist Len Kravitz answers this question for us: "It is actually plants that create the primary molecules in food that contain the energy quantified as calories. Green plants create these molecules from carbon dioxide and water by capturing energy from the sun in a process called photosynthesis."

Plants use this energy from the sun to create carbohydrates, which plants then use to create fats and proteins. Animals and humans absorb these nutrients when they eat plants or when they eat other animals. The same applies for fish in the ocean.

According to Kravitz, "the primary source of all calories is carbohydrates created by plants from carbon dioxide and water by capturing the energy of the sun." In short, calories come from the sun. I think it's fascinating to realize that the

CALORIFIC/ D3

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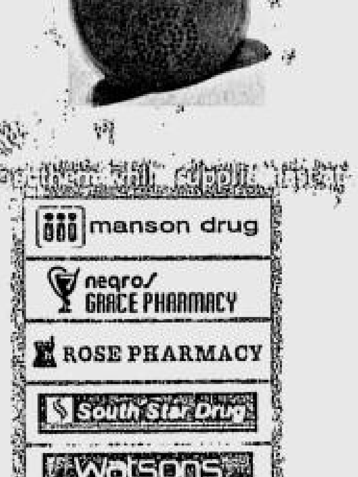


THE GANG's all here. Leah Puyat with Isabel Cacho, Peachy Zulueta, Anton Baretto, Angelette Calero, Eds Genuino and Ana Katigbak-Lim

CLOSE pals Ana Tirol and Catherine Huang

MONINA Bermejo

AINA Valencia

RIBBON-SNIPPING by hotshot guests of honor Luli Arroyo, Linda Francisco, Mayor Sonny Belmonte and Nedy Tantoco

Models, salon fixtures and 'groupies' can't get no satisfaction

MYRZA Sison

RHETT Eala

ANN Wongchukling, brand manager of Luxasia Inc., and mega businessman Tony Gonzales

RICSI and Paolo Carillo

CES Drilon and Miguel Mignada

ONE OF Cosmo Manille's leading schools for modeling, etiquette and personal development is the John Robert Powers School.

The school's recent batch of modeling graduates was sent to the International Modelling and Talent Association (IMTA) convention at the Hilton Hotel New York for the world competition.

And yes, *palanggas*, you guessed it, the **John Robert Powers** models won a number of citations.

Accompanying the models were the hard-working woman of all seasons, *simpatica* **Marivic Padilla Catala**, executive director of JRP-Manila.

Proudly witnessing the victory of our gals was Mr. Hotshot **Dick Upton**, who put up John Robert Powers in 1983 and hired **Tessie Macasaet** to run it.

Four hundred fashion and talent agents from all over the world jetted to New York to judge in the high-tension weeklong event, dahlings.

Our very own babe, exotic oriental looker **Connie Wang**, won top honorable mention for "fashion print and runway model."

Immediately after the affair, Connie received offers from modeling agencies in Milan, Paris, New York, Los Angeles and Chicago.

Renali Mercado, on the hand, received a several citations and was also offered jobs in Paris, Beijing, Tokyo, New York and Los Angeles.

Both gals are back in Cosmo-Manille training for their super-bright future in modeling, polishing up at John Robert Powers.

Bravo, girls! Your brightest dreams are about to come true, *palanggas*.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by
Alex Van Hagen
on **Kodak Max**

New fragrance

The renowned Luxasia, Inc., which is the *tres* (as in "very" exclusive distributor of quality fragrances in the country), had a fab launching of Omnia, by the chic Bulgari Parfums, at the Shangri-La Hotel.

Omnia is a light and feminine fragrance from the world-famous Italian fashion brand known for its tradition of design as well as its futuristic projection of lines, volumes and colors, Bulgari, natch!

At the entrance of the ballroom was a semispherical arch, reminiscent of the intriguing shape of Omnia's perfume flask, where twin circles meet at an ideal epicenter.

Finally, *palanggas*, Omnia was unveiled like a secret treasure by two sandal-clad models, **Angela** and **Tanya Silverio**, who wore white tunic gowns by **Ann Chaves.**

"The woman for whom Omnia is created, is elegant and proud, seductive and passionate—a synthesis of different cultures and times," explained beauty enthusiast **Macy Pineda.**

The combinations of mmm spices and aroma was complemented by the cocktail menu, which was especially conceived for the occasion by Makati Shangri-La's mega talented team of executive chef **Christopher Romine** and sous chef **Thomas Figovc.**

The guests enjoyed every bite of the fragrance and the exotic dishes.

All the ingredients—precious, refined and absolutely out of the ordinary, *palanggas*—lead the senses through an ideal voyage, projecting the inheritance of the past toward the future, in an eternal, totally timeless present, that is, yes, Omnia.

Salon-happy

Another place where one can be pampered and come out looking and feeling great is Piandre Salon in Libis.

The opening recently took on a Chinese character as the owner, **Linda Francisco,** happens to be a fan of Chinese rituals and beliefs. So she waited for the right *feng shui* time to formally throw the place's doors wide open.

From the dragon-faced invitations, to the grand ceremony that featured a lion dance and the giveaways, the guests were treated to a Chinese-style celebration.

The hotshot guests included popular Mayor **Sonny Belmonte,** brilliant presidential daughter **Luli Arroyo** and Rustan's **Nedy Tantoco.**

Feng shui master **Joseph Chau** briefed us on the benefits of the science of geomancy. Samples of the services were given the guests by the Piandre Libis staff, headed by stylist **Alona Carrasco, Francisco Quinones, Vicky Balinas** and **Ellen Reyes.**

Representatives of top hair products suppliers such as Sebastian, L'Oreal, Kérastase, Davines and Tigi were on hand to give on-the-spot hair analysis and treatments. Ah, that soothing foot reflex and massage were tried by socialites **Nedy Tantoco** and her pal, **Diana Jean Lopez. Violet Luym, Cathy Songco** and **Annie de Dios** were among those who had the cellophane treatments by Sebastian. Hair treatments were given to personalities such as **Eds Genuino,** and young and pretty **Catherine Huang** and **Arlene Ong.** Hair treatment was the most in demand that night, *palanggas.*

Piandre Libis is the biggest branch of Piandre. It is on E. Rodriguez Ave., right beside Pizza Hut and Citibank. It is a big salon with rooms for hair-coloring, Indian head massage, Jacuzzi body scrub and other amenities. It has an exclusive men's area. For the ladies, it has a facial and wax section.

Privacy and the luxury of space, dahlings, plus the introductory prices make Piandre irresistible.

Check it out, *palanggas,* and come out singing, "Im so pretty."

Stoned and happy

Swinging it in bustling-again Hong Kong were "groupies" of Mr. "I can't get satisfaction," the incredible, one-of-a kind Mick Jagger, who finally pushed through his Rolling Stones concert at the Crown Colony. The gig was scheduled April, but had to be canceled because of the SARS epidemic.

Rocking at the sold-out concert were **Bing Bing Gonzalez** and vivacious **Candy Cruz,** who jetted from London where she had spent several months.

Other concertgoers were RV Gonzalez; party couple Peng and Vicki Perez de Tagle; and Bambi Rivilla and Reujen Lista.

Then there was the group of Asian Spirit hotshots: **Noel Onate** and attractive **Marian Uy**; eligible bachelor **Ricky Delgado**; stylish **Celine Lopez** and **Marcel Crespo.**

The group was invited on a yachting cruise around the bay by **Sam Ahmed,** who was celebrating his 30th birthday.

Sam is heir to a vast real estate business in London. He is a resident of Hong Kong where he is in the garment business and supplies several American firms. As special guest, he had, yes, Mick Jagger, no less, *palanggas.*

While at the concert, Bing Bing Gonzalez was interviewed by a leading Hong Kong TV station. The network was impressed that a whole contingent of Cosmo Manille's' hip achievers jetted to the city for the wow concert.

Looking cozy were handsome **Troy Montero** and **Aubrey Miles.** "We're just friends," he said. There was also beautiful **Claudine Barretto.**

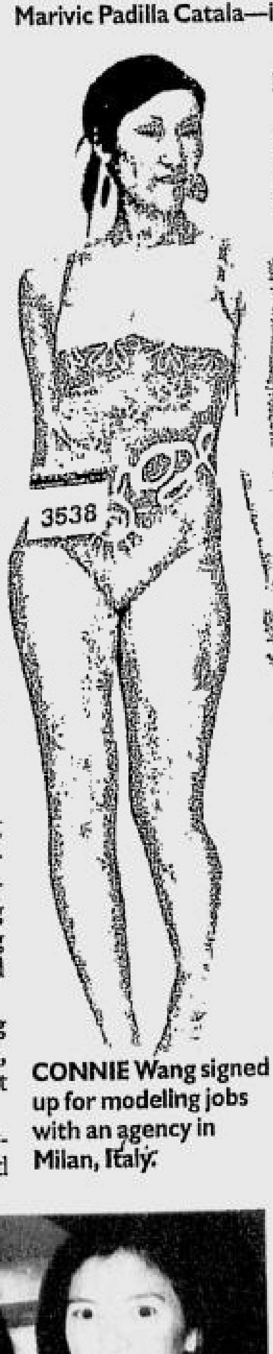
And who was the young Miss who got so boozed up in Club Bazurra that she had to be literally dragged back to her hotel? And this socialite who chills it out in the lobby of a hotel, who has this knack of turning an earful into a mouthful? Her gossip is so interesting that I always wish *moi* would know who she is talking about!

This business tycoon I chatted politics with at the InterContinental Hotel during the Halloween ball was telling me how screwed-up our system is getting. "Believe me, Maurice, it's getting harder and harder to support the government in the style to which they have all become accustomed to." Amen, sir.

SUSAN Aquilino, Susan Yao, Annie Teehankee and Violeta Luym

THEY like what they saw. Manelle Katigbak and Jojo Torres

TOP John Robert Powers gals—Bangkok director Pranome Thavaravej, Boston director Barbara Tyler and Manille director Marivic Padilla Catala—in New York for the world competition



CONNIE Wang signed up for modeling jobs with an agency in Milan, Italy.

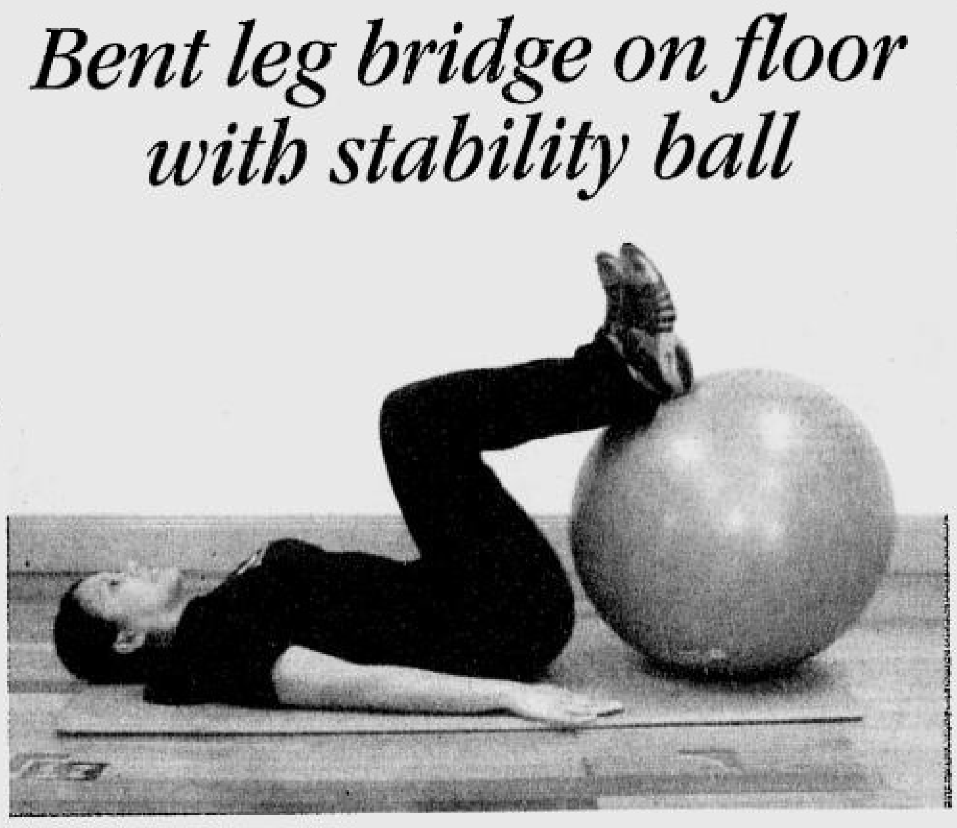
GENERAL manager of Luxasia Inc. Mia Nolasco (second from left) and country manager of Bulgari Manila Mario Katigbak flanked by models Angela and Tanya Silverio

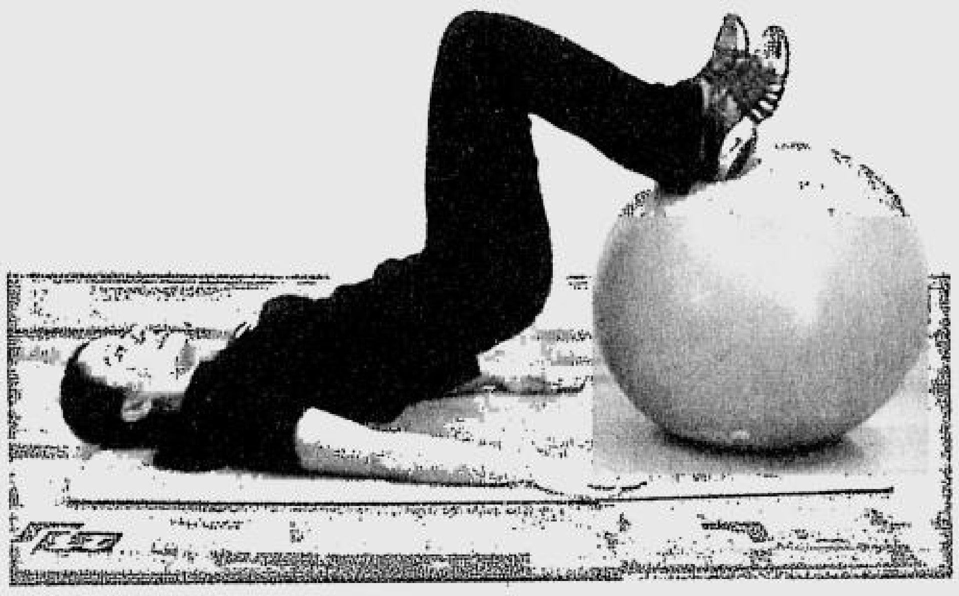
EXECUTIVES Leah Reyes, Ana Mauricio and Ruby Gan

THE WEE GALS. Shirley, Ivy and Ann Wee

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Bent leg bridge on floor with stability ball





STRENGTHENS buttocks and hamstrings (back of thighs); challenges core (abdominal) muscles.

Equipment:

Stability ball. As a substitute, you can use a sturdy chair or bed.

Exercise technique:

1. Lie down on the mat with your knees bent and your heels on top of the ball.
2. Press down on the ball with your heels and lift your hips.
3. Slowly lower down to starting position.
4. Do the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips:

1. Exhale as you lift your hips; inhale as you lower.
2. To make the exercise easier, place the ball closer to your buttocks and under your thighs.
3. Focus on keeping both hipbones level as you lift and lower.

Repetitions:

You have two options for doing this exercise:

a. Keep your hips lifted for 10 seconds (do not hold your breath; continue to breathe as you hold the position). Do three to five repetitions.

b. Lift and lower for 10 repetitions.

Calorific facts

From page D1

fat stored in your abdomen or hips originally came from outer space.

How are calories measured in food?

Doherty explains: "To measure the calorie content of food accurately, scientists use a bomb. A bomb calorimeter to be precise. The food sample to be measured is dried and ground into a powder. Then it is placed into the bomb calorimeter, a strong metal container surrounded by a water bath. The metal container is pumped full of pure oxygen at 30 atmospheres pressure and the food is ignited. The resulting energy released is fast and violent; just like a bomb. The steel container holds in the explosion. The calorimeter turns the energy stored in the food sample into heat flow. The temperature increase of the water and metal of the calorimeter reveals how many calories the food contained." Now you know what food scientists do in their laboratories—they blow up food.

From these experiments, scientists know that 1 g of fat contains 9 calories, 1 g of protein or carbohydrate contains 4 calories, and 1 g of pure alcohol contains 7 calories.

These figures are rounded off for ease in calculation. Fat actually has 9.3 calories while protein and carbohydrate have 4.2 calories per gram. Also, according to Dr. Bird, the amount of heat generated from fat differs a little for various foods, depending on fatty acid content. For example, there are 9.5 calories in 1 g of fat in meat and 9.25 calories for dairy products.

How are calories burned during exercise measured?

It's quite easy to grab hold of a chart showing how many calories are burned during various types of exercise. The information is available over the Internet, in nutrition manuals and fitness books. The groundwork for the research behind this information dates all the way back to the 1890s.

By measuring the heat produced by the body during exercise, scientists are able to determine the equivalent in calories. This method is called "direct calorimetry."

Another method involves measuring the amount of oxygen used and the amount of carbon dioxide produced during exercise. This is an example of "indirect calorimetry." The exerciser breathes through a mouthpiece or is placed in a special room called a metabolic chamber where ventilation is tightly controlled.

Scientists have found out that the burning of carbohydrates during exercise is equivalent to 5.05 calories for every 1 liter of oxygen consumed. For fat, it is 4.73 calories per 1 liter of oxygen. They also found out that there is a greater production of carbon dioxide when carbohydrates are burned compared to when fat is burned. So, scientists can accurately determine how many calories come from carbohydrates and how many come from fat during a single session of exercise. In fitness textbooks, the figures are rounded off to 5 calories per 1 liter of oxygen.

Scientists have also discovered that while resting (sitting quietly while reading a book or watching TV), the average person burns 1 calorie per kg of body weight per hour. In terms of oxygen, it is 3.5 milliliters of oxygen per kg of body weight per minute. This is what is known as your resting metabolic rate or RMR. If you burn more calories than the average person, you are considered to have a fast metabolism, and if you burn less, then you have a slower than normal metabolism. This is also the definition of 1 MET or 1 metabolic equivalent.

When you read a book or an article that says jogging burns 8 METS, it simply means jogging burns 8 times more calories than when you are resting. So if you weigh 120 pounds, you are burning 54.5 calories per hour while resting and 436 calories per hour of jogging.

Any activity that burns 3-6 METS is considered to be of moderate intensity, while an activity that burns more than 6 METS is considered to be a vigorous or high-intensity activity. METS are usually used to determine the intensity when you take a treadmill stress test.

Cardio equipment

Most cardio machines (treadmill, bike, elliptical trainer and rower) base their calorie burning formulas on a reference person who usually weighs 130 or 150 pounds. Unless you weigh exactly that much, the number being displayed on the console is slightly inaccurate. Here's how to make it more accurate.

Find out from the gym staff what the cardio machine's calculations are based on. Let's assume it's 130 pounds. Divide the number of calories burned by 130 pounds. Multiply the answer by your weight in pounds.

For example, the treadmill's display console says you burned 300 calories. Divide 300 calories by 130 pounds. The answer is 2.30 calories per pound. Multiply that by 120 pounds (your weight). The answer is 277 calories.

Then, if you are feeling bad because that's all the calories you burned for one hour of walking, console yourself with the fact that you burned 277,000 physics calories.

For past articles and exercises, go to www.tinajuanfitness.info; for suggestions for future columns, e-mail me at fitness@attglobal.net

Faith and biology

From page D4

Affirming the positive

- Do not run away from yourself; rather, run to yourself.
- Keep still. Stop running around in circles. Run toward the center of your own inner circle.
- Close your eyes.
- Visualize yourself smiling. Recall a time in your life when you were happiest. Bring back that same joy.
- Recite this joyful affirmation: "I will be more and more joyful with each passing day."
- Follow it up with this divine affirmation: "I embrace the divinity in me. I am one with God."

This is great for the face and for improving one's disposition: In a bowl of boiling hot water, mix one drop of lavender, mint and patchouli with five drops of coco virgin oil/almond oil. Inhale the goodness from a distance of a foot (you might scald yourself). Feel your own goodness.

Love and light!

(Sources: Newsweek; Andrew Newberg, MD, University of Pennsylvania; American Psychologist Journal; Ricxk Rogers, University of Colorado-Boulder; William Strawbridge, UCSF)

For women only: "Woman You've Got the Power," sponsored by Dove, Nestlé, Myra-E, Fitness First and INQUIRER *on Dec. 6 (Saturday) at SM Megamall. Highlights will be an aerobics competition and lectures on women's health, beauty and individual rights. Call 8132612-17.*

Reader asks about love, free will and karma

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

I RECEIVED a letter from a regular reader asking about relationships, free will and karma.

"I am writing you in relation to one of your articles. It is about your advice to one lady looking for ways to bring back her love. In this article, you said, if two people are meant for each other, no hindrance can separate them. If such is the case, may I ask about the free will of man?

"There are incidents which make me believe that what you said was true. However, there are also instances which sometimes make me think otherwise.

"Do you believe that two persons who look alike usually end up married to each other?

"In my second letter to you last year, you failed to answer this question. May I ask your opinion on the following questions? Is karma referring to your past, or to your ancestors? If karma means the reward or punishment you have to go through your present life because of one's good/bad deeds committed in past lives, then don't you think the essence and true meaning of karma is lost, since what you did in the past is in no way related to your present?"

There is no such thing as fate (or predestination) except what you yourself have willed it to be.

Nothing ever happens to anyone that he has not himself willed or chosen. Therefore, the will of man remains forever free and inviolate.

If something is meant for you, you will surely have it because you worked for it in the past life. If you don't get it, then it only means you really don't deserve it, or your karmic debt prevents you from having it.

If two people are about to get married and then something happens to prevent its completion, it only means that certain karmic lessons have to be learned or worked out first by both parties.

The situation was created by them in the past in order to comply with a karmic obligation. It is not because "fate," in the sense of an immutable destiny without their consent, has intervened.

The fact of the matter is they have actually willed it, following the inexorable laws of karma.

"Whatever you sow, you shall reap," no more no less, says the Bible.

I realize this may be a difficult pill to swallow—I mean, the idea that we make our own destinies, that we are solely responsible for whatever happens to us.

It is easier to blame fate or destiny rather than ourselves for anything that goes wrong in our lives. But the cosmic truth is, we always are what we have chosen to be.

Otherwise, man's free will and the laws of karma become meaningless words.

Karma simply means that you are meeting today the consequences of your actions in the past. The personality of the present moment may change, but the entity is the same. You may change the clothes you wore yesterday, but it is still you wearing them.

In a somewhat similar manner, actions you did in a past life continue to haunt you in this life, because it is still you who did it. You merely changed your clothes or your physical shell. The entity is the same—you.

Therefore, you are still responsible now for the action you did in the past. Just because you've changed your clothes does not mean you are no longer the same individual.

It is not your ancestor who created the action in the past life, it is still you, but in a different body. Therefore, it is not right to say that, "what you did in the past is in no way related to your present."

You may no longer be aware of what you did in the past life, but your higher self knows all the time, for the soul never forgets. Under deep hypnosis, people have been made to recall vividly their past choices, obligations and actions.

Regarding physical resemblance and marriage: What I know is that two people who have been married for a long time to each other and are sincerely in love with each other eventually begin to look alike physically.

I guess that great love is responsible for this phenomenon. If you love somebody intensely enough, you will eventually resemble him in many ways.

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City. Call 8107245/8926806 or e-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit http://j.licauco.tripod.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.

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Faith and biology

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

THE GAP is closing.

Science and religion will soon merge. Rather than remain in opposite worlds, they will fuse to validate what sages have been espousing all along—that they are one.

There is no conflict here. Faith has become, and always will be, an intriguing and undeniable powerhouse for healing. In short, God is good medicine.

In a stunning cover story titled "God and Health," Newsweek recently explored the world of churchgoing and spiritual individuals who meditate. The results? A discovery that many of us already knew—faith heals.

Scientific data reveal that "meditating nuns have increased activity in regions (of the brain) used for concentration and decreased activity in areas promoting a sense of self (or ego)."

The message here is, if you want to improve your health, pray and meditate. Assuming, of course, that you are religiously following a health regimen.

Effects of faith on health

Regular church and service attendance promotes a longer life. Being prayed for moderately improves physical recovery from acute illnesses.

Religion and spirituality protect against moderate cardiovascular disease, cancer mortality and disability. They also improve recovery and healing and slow down the progression of disease.

The study's biggest discovery was that, yes, "churchgoers live longer than others."

Cited figures correlated churchgoing frequency with life expectancy as follows: Those who attended church more than weekly lived to 83 years of age and those who went once a week lived to age 82. Less than weekly churchgoers died at 80 years old and those who did not go to church died at age 75.

Likelihood of life changes

It was also observed that those who go to church with regularity eventually drop their bad habits, thereby adopting a healthier lifestyle.

Among the findings: there was 131 percent likelihood for those who attended church to become less depressed; 78 percent likelihood that they would quit smoking; 54 percent that they had more exercise and 39 percent that they stopped drinking.

Some might claim that these are anecdotal evidence. One thing is clear, though. Science is not looking away from religion, but rather into it.

How well do you pray? As Bible class and cell group teacher Diane Hernandez of New Life Church explains, "It's not the litany of prayers nor the length of time you pray, but your fervor that determines prayer power."

It follows then that if you pray with enough humility, sincerity and trust, your prayers will be answered. Therefore, how well or fervently you pray can also determine the extent and degree of healing you will get (an angle Newsweek did not explore).

Because of the success of prayer warriors and religious rallies to effect spontaneous healing, many in the medical community have come to believe that "what happens in a person's mind can be as important to health as what happens on a cellular level."

This has led "many doctors to embrace the God they banished from the clinic long ago."

Enlightened doctor

French-born Dr. David Sevan Schreiber is a clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

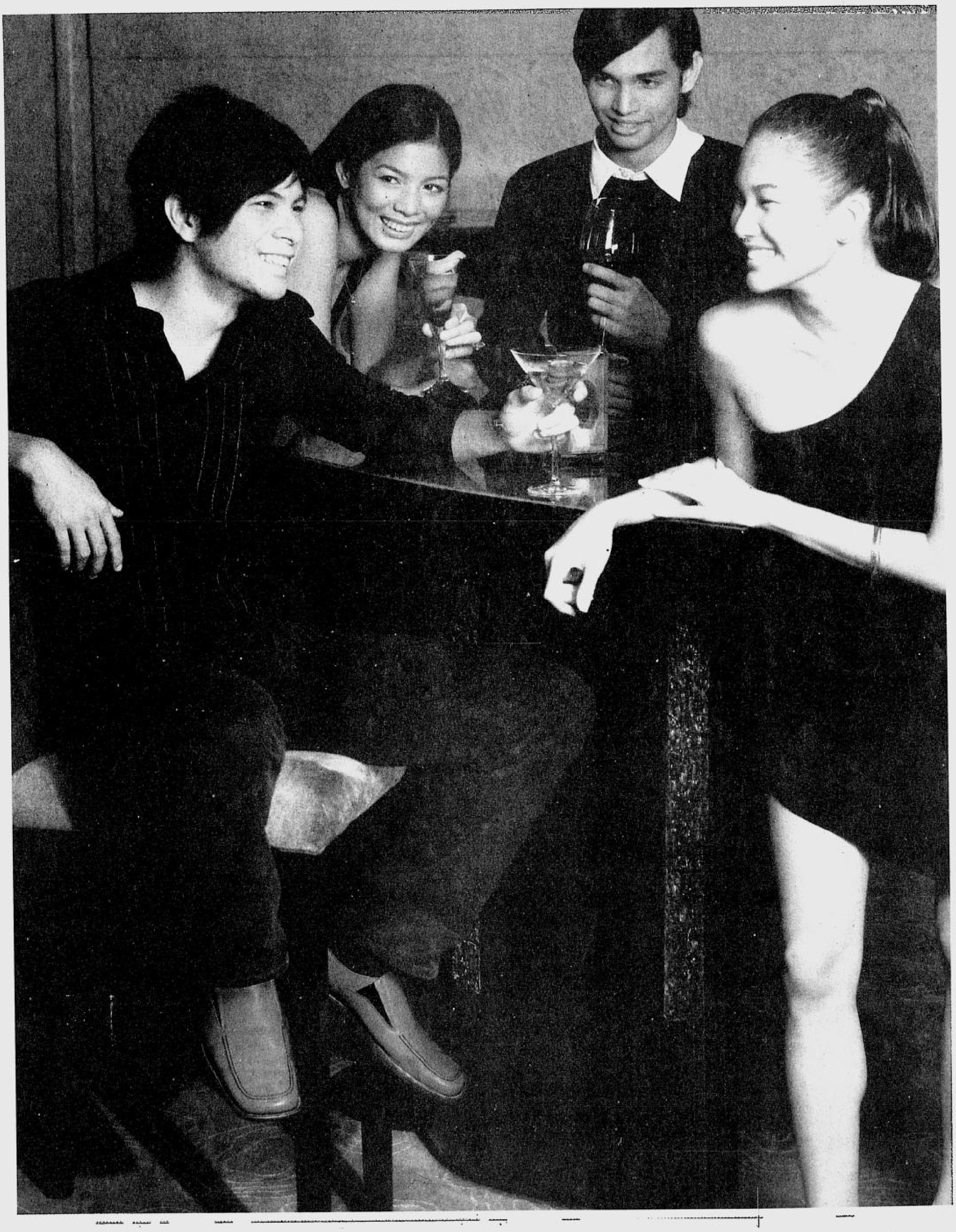
It was he who wrote the best-selling book, "Guerir: The Instinct to Heal," which explored the connection between mind and body.

The book gave novel insights on how to treat chronic illnesses like depression. Schreiber said that close to 70 percent of primary-case health problems are actually stress-related, and that blood pressure medication, anti-depressants and anti-inflammatories are just temporary measures to ease the symptoms, but not the real cause of illness.

One therefore should not only treat the symptoms but heal the root cause of the illness. Believing that spirituality plays a major role in a patient's ability to heal, Schreiber says, "If prayer produces a state of calm, that correlates positively to our health."

However, there is also such a thing as unhealthy spirituality, which believes that God will perform miracles even if we continue to abuse our health.

FAITH/ D3



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